



Ken Field

Owner of Slate Belt Energy Services

Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times

Mini Split Musings

From what I read, many people are abandoning central heating systems and switching to mini split heat pumps. To me that equates to letting a broken down car sit in the driveway and buying a scooter. At first it seems like a huge money saver and a great idea but eventually they may regret it. I could be wrong. Being wrong is one of my hobbies. However, I have installed and serviced many brands of mini split heat pumps and I don't see them as an alternative to a central heating system. There are multiple types of heating system and some of them don't even come with air conditioning so the cooling feature makes a mini split system useful in summer for those homes. I don't believe the property value will be increased much by a mini split system and I don't believe that people will have them serviced properly. Many of my service calls are for dirty systems and some have even had mold inside them.

There's nothing fun about having a guy on a ladder with a pressure washer in your living room or your bedroom or your dining room. All brands have specific parts and they need them more often than you may think. Fan motors seem to get noisy and then fail. Each motor is specific to a brand and model and things like parts should be considered before you settle on a brand for your home. Refrigerant leaks inside the units are the next most troubling problem I've seen. I'm not even counting the leaks caused by installers yet. There are some technical aspects to installation that must be adhered to very carefully and I can tell you that many installers just don't have the proper tools for that. Finding someone other than the installer to honor a warranty on a system can be difficult and/or expensive. When a leak happens none of the units attached to a system will work. So you may be right back where you started. Especially in freezing temperatures when a technician has to setup ladders and search for a leak.

The scooter is fine but don't abandon the car. Having a central heating system that operates and preventing pipes from freezing is something you will thank yourself for later. You don't need to keep the house at 72° with it, but don't scrap it just yet. In fact if you talk to someone with knowledge about it you may be able to control the heat in each room without spending a fortune.

Ken Field is the owner of Slate Belt Energy and Field's Service, Inc. As a certified energy rater and contractor, he is qualified to assess every aspect of energy usage and prescribe solutions to save energy. He can be reached at 610-759-6306 or email Ken@FieldsService.com

Ben Franklin Northeast to Invest \$1.1 million in the Regional Economy

By Dannah Hartman

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY - Ben Franklin Technology Partners of Northeastern Pennsylvania's (Ben Franklin Northeast) Board of Directors has approved the investment of \$1.1 million in support of regional economic development. 11 companies, including six technology startups and five established manufacturers, from Ben Franklin Northeast's service area received funding.

Ben Franklin Northeast announces the following early-stage company investments in Northampton County.

BRD Noise and Vibration Control, Inc. Northampton County

Ben Franklin Northeast Investment: \$10,000

BRD Noise and Vibration Control designs and manufactures materials for noise and vibration control for large commercial HVAC systems and industrial equipment. This investment supports the implementation of parametric drawings which will enable the company to improve the productivity of engineering resources, on-time delivery and resource utilization, customer service, quality of product, and support top-line growth plans. BRD Noise and Vibration Control will partner with Lehigh University's Center for Supply Chain Management on this project.

Straight Arrow Products Northampton County

Ben Franklin Northeast Investment: \$20,000

Straight Arrow Products produces hair and skin care products for the equestrian and human markets. The investment supports the implementation of new modules to their Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to enhance forecasting and reporting. Straight Arrow Products will partner with Lehigh University's Center for Supply Chain Management on this project.

Spoke Sciences, Inc. Northampton County

Ben Franklin Northeast Investment: \$400,000

Spoke Sciences develops technologies to deliver insoluble lipidic ingredients in water-based formulations. This investment supports scale up of research, development, and commercialization efforts.



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