



**Ken Field**

Owner of Slate  
Belt Energy  
Services

Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times

## Tankless Water Heaters

These water heaters are becoming very popular. The ones that heat your home and also your hot water are referred to as COMBI systems. Instead of having a huge boiler sitting in your basement, you can have one of these hanging on the wall. They are only for natural

gas and propane and not oil. The biggest benefits of these units is that they are 95% efficient, not 80% or less like most other hot water sources and they don't need a chimney. As a matter of fact they can't use a chimney even if you have one because they vent with plastic pipe. They pack a lot of heating power into a small package and in order to do that they need to keep close tabs on many parameters of operation. Sometimes you need a little heat and sometimes you need a lot. These systems vary to meet the demand. They only hold a gallon or so of water so there isn't any room to run over or under on temperature. The ones that do heat and hot water have even more things to monitor. When you open a faucet, it needs to immediately heat that water or you'll stand there waiting and wasting lukewarm water. There are some complicated components and a computer to control them all. Maintenance isn't difficult or expensive on most of them. Every brand has a different design and different controllers so there is no standardization among them. I've already had 2 brands we used discontinue a model and make parts unavailable so I no longer make any promises about how long they will last. I actually had to replace one that was only 8 years old because the manufacturer could not help us make it work properly.

They do a great job at both things they are designed for. It is important to install them exactly by the book and I've seen a few that were problems because of piping. So far I have used 4 different brands and am very happy with 2 of them. I think they are a good value. They won't last forever but no water heater does. They will pay for themselves because of the efficiency and the fact that gas is less expensive than electricity.

If you have natural gas there are rebates from UGI for both systems. They offer \$500 for hot water and \$1500 for a combi system. But even

without the rebates you can free up some space in your basement and get unlimited hot water.

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

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## Additional Classes for Free Basic Construction Methods & Operations Training for Northampton County Residents

By Brittney Waylen

EASTON - County Executive Lamont G. McClure and Northampton Community College (NCC) announce that NCC will be providing additional training for Northampton County residents to enhance the skills of current home construction employees or prepare new employees for employment, thanks to a grant provided by the Northampton County Department of Economic Development.

The free training program will include hands-on instruction in basic construction methods and operations, including hand and power tools, framing and applications of trim, drywall and wall repairs, door and window installation, ladder and scaffolding safety, and building code awareness. Candidates successfully completing the program will earn an OSHA 10-Hour Outreach Training for Construction card. An employer day will also be included so participants will have the opportunity to network and interview with potential employers.

Interested participants must attend a mandatory Information Session on Tuesday, January 9, 2024, 9-10am; 11am-12pm; 1-2pm, or 3-4pm at the Fowler Family Southside Center, Room 523. The 6-week training program will be held Monday-Thursday, January 22, 2024, through March 7, 2024, from 9am-3:30pm at the Fowler Family Southside Center (511 E. 3rd St., Bethlehem).

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth appropriated federal funds from the COVID-19 Response Restricted Account to the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development for the Whole-Home Repairs Program. The Whole-Home Repairs Program will provide funding for Northampton County homeowners to address habitability and safety concerns, provide measures to improve energy or water efficiency, and make units accessible for individuals with disabilities in owner-occupied, primary residences. Responsibilities of an approved governmental entity under the grant agreement must invest in workforce development programs that will connect trainees to jobs through committed employer partnerships related to improving the habitability and performance of homes.

Northampton County residents interested in registering should email Heather Ehritz at [hehritz@northampton.edu](mailto:hehritz@northampton.edu) for the information session and questions. Participants will be qualified once the requirements are met and following the interview process.

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