



Ken Field
Owner of Slate
Belt Energy
Services

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Heat Pump Reality

Last week I explained how a heat pump works in theory. I hope I didn't bore you too badly. This week I will talk about why heat pumps are not the greatest thing to heat with.

One reason there are so many heat pump systems in use are because they are air conditioners too. Many years ago people would put in hot water heat and then need a second system for air conditioning.

That is almost too expensive to do anymore although it is still the most comfortable combination by far. Heat pumps are not really appropriate for our climate. For example a 24000btu heat pump only produces 24,000 btus until the outdoor temperature goes below 47°. Then it starts losing capacity. At 15° it makes about 13000 btus. So when you need more heat, you get less heat. That's because there is just less heat in the outside air to squeeze into your home. Then because it is operating at a low temperature it builds up ice on the outdoor coil and has to defrost occasionally. Defrost mode is just turning the air conditioning on for a few minutes and taking heat from the house and using it to melt the ice on the outdoor unit. Sort of like the old Shirley

Temple movies where they went up 4 steps then back down 2 then up 3 and back one. It's hard to get ahead operating like that. But the killer is the backup heat. Almost all heat pumps have electric backup heaters inside the fan unit. They put your air fryer to shame. These things are power hungry and they are the reason your electric bill is \$500 per month. Not because of the heat pump, but the backup heater. Estimating \$3/hour of electric use for the backup heater is not out of the question. If there are 720 hours in a month and your backup heater is running for a large part of that time it makes up a huge part of the electric bill.

You just need to know what you are dealing with. There are other forms of backup for heat pumps but the electric heater is by far the easiest, fastest, and least expensive to install. That's why they were promoted by the electric companies in the first place and now why they are promoting them again. There is truly nothing "green" about a heat pump. It just moves the cost of producing heat from gas and oil in your basement to a generating station somewhere remote to you. Of course you pay for that convenience and it's not cheap at all.

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

Grow NorCo Grants Awarded

By Becky Bartlett

EASTON - Lamont McClure and the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) announce that County Council approved \$780,900 for 58 Grow NORCO grants at their December 1st meeting. Grow NORCO Program grants are available to Northampton County non-profit organizations and municipalities. Grants of up to \$50,000 can be used for Capital Improvements, Façade Programs, Operations and Community Planning. All projects must be completed by December 31, 2023.

"The County of Northampton appreciates the hard work provided by our non-profit organizations and municipalities," says Lamont McClure. "It's important that the County continues to support their contributions which improve public health and economic development."

Project	Grant
Allen Township Speed Alert Radar Message Signs	\$ 9,000
ArtsQuest PNC Parking Lot & Light Fixtures	\$25,000
Bangor Borough Lighting & Safety Upgrades at Borough Parks	\$20,000
Bath Borough Parks Master Plan	\$20,000
Bethlehem Economic Development Corp Greenway Stairs Mural	\$ 7,500
Bethlehem Emergency Sheltering, Inc 2022-2023 Emergency Shelter Operations Support	\$20,000
Bethlehem Township Park Pavilion Roofs	\$25,000
Bloom for Women Vehicle Replacement	\$15,000
Bushkill Township Police Pole Building	\$15,000
Bushkill Twp Volunteer Fire Company Pavilion Construction	\$15,000
City of Easton Sitgreaves St. Walkability & Community Improvements	\$25,000
Community Bike Works Salary & Benefits Earn a Bike Program	\$ 5,000
Community Fire Company of Forks Township Fire Training Facility Repairs	\$40,000
Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Trail Amenity & Interpretation Improvements	\$ 4,500
East Allen Township Volunteer Ambulance Corp Building Improvements	\$15,000
East Bangor Borough Legacy Pavilion Restoration Project	\$15,000
Easton Area Community Center Purchase of cubicles & desks	\$ 7,000
Family Connection of Easton, Inc. Bilingual Family Support Specialist Salary Support	\$ 7,500
Freemansburg Borough Construction of an Amphitheater	\$15,000
Godfrey Daniels Replacement of Carpet & Laminate Flooring	\$ 7,100
Greater Community Development Corporation Emergency Shelter Renovations-flooring/restrooms	\$11,000
Greater Easton Development Partnership Easton Public Market HVAC Replacement	\$25,000
Greater Valley YMCA #1 Bethlehem Chilcare Renovation Phase III	\$15,000
Greater Valley YMCA #2 Nazareth Branch Operational Support	\$ 7,500
Greater Valley YMCA #4 Improvement/Expansion of programming Slate Belt Branch	\$ 7,500
Hanover Township Forklift Purchase	\$ 9,500
Hellertown Borough Reinhard's Park Improvements	\$15,000
Historic Bethlehem Museum & Sites Kemerer Museum Exterior Painting & Restoration	\$10,000
Jacobsburg Historical Society Installation of new heat pump systems & security upgrades	\$15,000

Lehigh Township Enhanced security of township buildings	\$14,000
Lehigh Township Volunteer Fire Company #1 LED sign purchase & installation	\$ 3,000
LifePath Foundation New flooring for Bethlehem day services program	\$10,000
Lower Mt Beth Township Centerfield playground & tennis court upgrades	\$20,000
Lower Nazareth Township Municipal building generator	\$20,000
Lower Saucon Township Purchase of security cameras	\$15,000
Miller Keystone Blood Center Tube Sealer purchase	\$ 4,500
Minsi Trails Council #502, Boy Scouts of America Inner-city scouting in Northampton County	\$ 5,000
Moravian Historical Society Installation of track lighting on 3 rd floor of Whitefield House	\$ 4,400
National Museum of History 2 nd Floor expansion project – Phase 2b	\$20,000
Nazareth Borough Rehabilitation & repaving of park basketball courts	\$25,000
Nazareth Economic Development Commission 2023 Façade Program	\$20,000
New Bethany, Inc. Choice food pantry renovation	\$20,000
Northampton County Historical & Genealogical Society Renovations/rehabilitation of Bachmann Publick House & Sigal Museum	\$20,000
Palmer Township Parks & Open Space master design plan	\$20,000
Pen Argyl Borough Weona Park Sign	\$10,000
Pennsylvania Playhouse Flashing LED signs	\$ 2,800
Plainfield Township Road Widener purchase	\$15,000
Project of Easton, Inc. Parking lot improvements	\$10,000
Safe Harbor Easton Inc. Salary & Operational support	\$10,000
Sights for Hope Sight-guided transportation with visual impairments or blindness	\$10,000
Stephen's Place, Inc. Operational support	\$10,300
Suburban Emergency Medical Services Salary & operational support for new position	\$10,000
Touchstone Theatre Office wall repairs	\$ 5,100
United Way of the Greater Lehigh Valley Expansion of project Lifesaver Public Safety Program	\$ 7,000
Upper Mt Bethel Township Sprinkle Park	\$10,000
Upper Nazareth Township Technology upgrade	\$20,000
Via of the Lehigh Valley, Inc. Capital improvement projects	\$ 8,600
Walnutport Canal Association Fence replacement around Locktender's House	\$ 3,100

	\$780,900
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Boscola Announces \$256,000 Traffic Signal Technologies Grant For Lower Nazareth Township

By Joe Kelly

BETHLEHEM – State Senator Lisa M. Boscola announced today that Lower Nazareth Township has been awarded a \$256,000 state grant through the Traffic Signal Technologies Grant (TSTG) program for signal system upgrades and connection to PennDOT's unified command and control software along Route 248.

"The Traffic Signal Technologies Grant program was enacted earlier this year to provide much needed resources to local governments to assist with implementing technologies that will help ease traffic congestion and improve traffic flow in heavily traveled corridors such as Rt. 248 in Lower Nazareth Township," Senator Boscola stated. "It's critical that the Commonwealth partner with our municipalities to address traffic congestion issues and I am pleased that this state funding will allow Lower Nazareth Township to move forward on addressing issues along Route 248."

The Traffic Signal Technologies Grant program was created as part of Act 54 of 2022, enacted on July 11, 2022, which included \$5 million to provide grants to municipalities to install and maintain traffic signal technologies. The TSTG program is a reimbursement grant program for municipalities that is administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation.

