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## What You Can't See

We have repaired 2 flip homes this spring already and I think that may be a new niche. Flippers usually are only concerned with curb appeal and a nice looking indoor space. Mechanicals are usually not done very well and sometimes are really a hack job. Then after a buyer gets settled in they realize that comfort is not going to be possible. Most times a wide temperature spread between first floor and second floor, and sometimes huge energy bills for the size of the house are the symptoms of a flipper hack. Because the desire of a flipper is to have as much finished space as possible they will finish attics and basements.

Those spaces are the most difficult to do and if no attention is paid to ducts and pipes and the other important things that make up the infrastructure of a house, a disaster is imminent. Sometimes it is just hack plumbing that leaks but most times it is undersized duct repairs and modifications that don't even come close to providing enough air to condition the space they serve. It is always disappointing to explain why things don't work. We will always find a solution but most times it will cause some inconvenience in the space we need to allocate for new ducts and usually does not fit in the homeowners' budget. Occasionally we can install a duct booster or find some other way to make an improvement in comfort. Sometimes adding the proper insulation can be done without opening walls and ceilings. Even then it is rare for just that to correct the whole problem. It would be wise for a prospective buyer to have an energy audit performed before making an offer but in today's market there is no doubt that some other unsuspecting buyer would show up and offer more than the asking price before the audit was even finished.

Although I am pointing out all the problems, I don't have a solution. That seems unfair but it is not as simple as enacting new building codes or requiring inspections.

It comes down to unscrupulous business people who live by the "buyer beware" mantra and will never divulge what they know about the flaws they created. They will also not be around to answer questions or stand behind their work because every sale is as-is. I know a handful of contractors who have gotten rich by using investors' money and cheap labor to hack flipper after flipper. A professional can correct any of these problems but the cost may prohibit those repairs for several years and living in uncomfortable spaces for those years is frustrating.

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](mailto:Ken@FieldsService.com)

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## HUD Announces New Critical Investments in our Nation's Public Housing

By U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development  
WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced Wednesday a \$30 billion housing voucher initiative that will award more than \$800 million to various groups across Pennsylvania.

According to an HUD press release, Pennsylvania was awarded \$803.7 million as part of the agency's "Housing Choice Voucher" (HCV) Program. The funding is intended to help public housing authorities assist those in need of affordable housing options.

"At HUD, our mission is to create strong, sustainable, inclusive communities and quality homes for all," said HUD Acting Secretary Adrienne Todman. "Today's grant funding is a necessary investment that will not only ensure that the homes offered in public housing fit the needs of its residents, but it will also strengthen neighborhoods for generations to come."



### Funding in our area:

#### LEHIGH VALLEY

Allentown Housing Authority, \$16,600,246  
Bethlehem Housing Authority, \$3,855,442  
Easton Housing Authority, \$5,137,895  
Lehigh County Housing Authority, \$4,817,943  
Northampton County Housing Authority, \$11,077,607

#### POCONOS

Carbon County Housing Authority, \$2,736,340  
Monroe County Housing Authority, \$5,279,974