

Coronavirus Aid, Relief & Economic Security (CARES) Highlights:

Long-Term Living Programs: \$692 million
Intellectual Disability & Autism: \$260 million
Child Care: \$116 million

Vaccine & Treatment Development: \$10 million
Critical Access Hospitals: \$10 million
Community Health Centers: \$10 million

Small Business Assistance: \$225 million
Mortgage & Rental Assistance: \$175 million

School COVID-19 Cleaning: \$150 million
Higher Ed Assistance: \$42.2 million
State System of Higher Ed: \$30 million

Dairy Farmers Assistance: \$20 million
State Food Purchase Program: \$20 million

First Responders: \$50 million

New Funding Supports Families, Small Businesses, Nursing Homes, First Responders and More

By Senator Scavello

PEN ARGYL - Last week, the General Assembly approved a bipartisan package of bills to deliver funding to families and organizations impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, including small businesses, nursing homes, first responders and affected employees. The funding comes from a portion of Pennsylvania's share of money from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

Approximately two-thirds of all COVID-19 deaths in the state have been residents of nursing homes and other long-term living facilities. More than \$690 million in the package is dedicated to increased testing, infection control, personal protective equipment and other measures to support residents and staff.

An additional \$225 million is directed to help small business recover from the damages caused by the pandemic and the governor's shutdown orders. A portion of new funding directed to counties can be used for small business assistance as well.

The CARES package also provides important assistance to low- and middle-income families by investing \$175 million through the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency to provide rent and mortgage assistance. The program would provide monthly mortgage assistance, up to \$1,000, and rent assistance, up to \$750, to those who lost their job or experienced a 30 percent or more loss in pay as a result of the coronavirus.

In addition, a new \$50 million COVID-19 Crisis Fire Company and Emergency Medical Services Grant Program would be created to provide grants to all companies that received funding through the Fire Company Grant Program and Emergency Medical Services Grant Program in January. Companies that received a grant will automatically receive the additional money, while companies that did not receive a grant will need to submit an application to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

Senate leaders offered more information on these and other programs funded by the CARES Act at a news conference last week.

Northampton County to Receive Block Grants From State's Budget

By Michael Ortoski

EASTON - Northampton County thanks Governor Wolf and the Pennsylvania Legislature for providing us with the ability to relieve some of the pain our small businesses and municipalities are and will be experiencing due to the global pandemic caused by the Coronavirus. We'd specifically like to thank Sen. Lisa Boscola and Sen. Mario Scavello for their work on this vital legislation as we begin to help our small businesses recover and try to help municipalities with unmet needs due to revenue shortfalls."

Northampton County is slated to receive \$27,631,662.79 in block grants from the State budget to help address the disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The funding will assist the county with the cost of purchasing personal protective equipment, help local governments and provide grants to small businesses.



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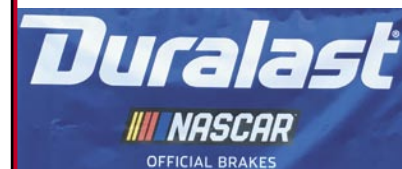
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Ken Field

Owner of Slate Belt Energy Services

Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times

The Hidden Cost of Cheap

There are many brands of central air conditioners on the market and many levels of quality within each brand. There is always one level of quality I suggest avoiding and that is the entry level model. Every manufacturer has to compete with every other and most times the price they show to attract a customer's attention is for the base model. In an air conditioner the base model is actually not a good value because it is missing a couple protective devices that can help protect the system if something goes wrong. They are designed to be as minimal as possible in every aspect. They have less screws holding them together, less quality on every part inside. That is why the warranty on these systems is short too. Most parts will have a one year warranty and the compressor will have a 5 year warranty. The quality of this particular model in any brand does not reflect on the manufacturer though because they are providing what some customers want. Where I see the biggest problem is when builders use this model and then a homeowner has to take over after the house is built and attempt to get more than 8 years or so out of these models.

I'm not suggesting that the homeowners would have opted for a more expensive model but they should have had it offered to them in case they knew the information I am sharing today. The second level models are really the first that should be considered and only if the budget means everything at the moment and long life is not important. The real value point is probably the third step up from the bottom. The warranty will be much better, the quality will be noticeably better, and the system will probably purr for 20 years without and major cost to the owner if it is installed correctly.

If you break it down by cost of ownership you may find that the budget system could cost much more than the value system even though the installed cost was 1/3 less. A \$7000 system that lasts 18 years has an annual cost of \$466/year. A \$5000 system that lasts 9 years has an annual cost of \$555/year. In addition to the better quality, the efficiency is always better because of more copper and aluminum for heat transfer. If it is a heat pump, the difference could be \$10/month savings in operating cost at least.

Don't just look at the bottom line and don't choose by brand without checking on the model you are getting.

Ken Field is the owner of Field's Service, Inc. and Slate Belt Energy Services. He has over 40 years of experience in heating, air conditioning and is certificated by RESNET and BPI in various areas of energy conservation. He can be reached at 610-599-8832 or at www.SlateBeltEnergy.com



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An Update on Pandemic Unemployment Assistance

By Rep. Joe Emrick

NAZARETH - Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) claimants will now be receiving their PUA and federal pandemic unemployment compensation payments via paper checks for the foreseeable future as an added precaution.

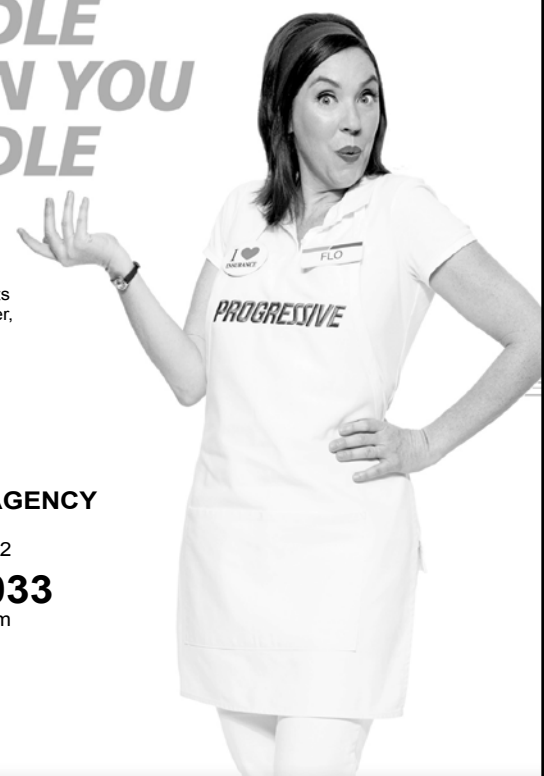
The Notice of Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Filed was mailed to all PUA claimants due to the Department of Labor and Industry's recent discovery of attempts by scammers to apply for PUA using others' personal information.

It is important to note that no UC data was breached – the scam involves stolen identities from other sources. Visit the department's website for more information http://links.pahousenews.com/q/RfbXXhLn5dfl8QPuUGS7pL1uMrd8dscUdbeaFbP0HelzPfDo3ADDpp12_vhw.



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