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## Trades Rule

I don't know what kind of information students are being given today about future employment opportunities but I do remember that college was the primary suggestion when I was in high school. I believe that there are more trade schools now then there were then and that is important because almost every trade is more complicated now. Code compliance is not just for the employer. It is an important thing for every worker to understand. Being an apprentice is a very good way to learn a trade but starting with no knowledge at all is not very appealing to an employer.

Most people I talk to who have been in a trade for many years seem to think that it isn't a good choice for young people to pursue. It doesn't matter what trade it is. I feel like that is caused by a slow burnout that everyone experiences after many years of doing the same work. They take for granted the security that comes from being very good at a job. I don't think that anyone who has been doing the same thing for 20 or so years can't wait to wake up tomorrow and do it again but nobody ever said that a career would be packed with excitement.

In the heating and air conditioning trade there have been many changes since I first got started. Technology has made troubleshooting problems easier even though the equipment is more complicated. On the refrigerant side, tools have made it simpler to pinpoint problems with the closed system and also to adjust it to get the best efficiency out of it. A new technician doesn't need a binder full of charts and specifications because most of the charts are built into the tools we use and the calculations are done internally. Any specific information we need is available on the internet and is right at our fingertips. The truth is that younger people are faster and better with that kind of technology than people my age but I probably appreciate it more because it wasn't always available.

Any job is what you make of it and employment in any trade won't be the same every day. That means some will be more enjoyable than others and some will be harder than others but every single day will require problem solving and structured thinking. That's probably why I still look forward to what lies ahead of me every day.

I would not discourage anyone from selecting HVAC as a career.

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)

## Blues, Brews & Barbecue Festival Sugaray Rayford To Headline Allentown's Annual

By Allentown Business Alliance

ALLENTOWN - The Downtown Allentown Business Alliance in partnership with the Allentown Chamber of Commerce and the City of Allentown is proud to present the 15th Annual Blues, Brews, and Barbecue Festival on Saturday, June 24th from 12 noon until 10pm in Downtown Allentown. This year's festival represents the most impressive Blues line-up Allentown has ever witnessed!

Headlining this year's festival is Grammy-nominated, multiple award-winning Blues superstar, Sugaray Rayford. Texas born Caron "Sugaray" Rayford began his musical career at the age of 7 singing & playing drums in church, and his gospel influence can be heard and felt in his music. Rayford was awarded 'Soul Blues Male Artist of the Year,' National Recording of the Year, and at the 41st Blues Music Awards in 2020, Rayford was presented with two Blues Music Awards for 'B.B. King Entertainer of the Year' and 'Soul Blues Male Artist of the Year'.

Opening for Sugaray Rayford this year is Annika Chambers and Paul DesLauriers. Canadian Blues-Rocker DesLauriers and Houston, Texas native, Chambers unified their artistic destinies in 2019. Between the two incredibly talented rockers, they have been named Soul-Blues Female Artist of the Year by the Blues Music Awards, Entertainer of the Year and Guitarist of the Year by the Maple Blues Awards.

Also making their debut this year is The Gabe Stillman Band from Williamsport, PA. Gabe formed the band in 2015, shortly after graduating from Boston's Berklee College of Music. Industry professionals have taken notice as evident by Gabe's invitation to support ZZ Top at the famed Key West Amphitheater and as a Blues Music Award nominee in the Best New Emerging Artist Album category.

In addition to the line-up are the following:

Clarence Spady has been described as "the future of the blues" (Bill Dahl, Chicago Tribune). He plays with depth and sensitivity, effortlessly combining blues, jazz, funk, Latin and rock into his own unique style. His moving guitar playing, rough street-edged vocals, songwriting, and live improvisations are highlighted with every performance.

The James Pace Band is a six-person band that was originated in 1996. In the summer of 2022, the James Pace Band was awarded as a Top 5 Qualifier candidate for Audacy (formerly Radio.com) "Opening Act" to perform at the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles.

The Blues Reincarnation Project's goal is to bring blues back to the younger generations. They blend together blues-rock, British blues, and new age blues.

The Groove Merchants have been electrifying audiences through Blues, Funk, and Soul since 2012. The Groove Merchants play your favorite current hits on the radio, as well as rock out to music from all decades.

In addition to Sugaray Rayford, Annika Chambers & Paul DesLauriers, and the above-mentioned performers, the line-up also includes Lehigh Valley favorites; Tavern Tan, the Mississippi Pig Farmers, BC Blue, Bryant Brothers Band, Blues-time, and Dustin Douglas & The Electric Gentleman.

New in 2023 is also two Blues Break acts. These two sets will offer a variety of music outside of the Blues genre for our guests to enjoy. The featured Blues Breaks are:

Hector Rosado and His Latin Jazz Experience  
And Mystik Fool

Working with our partner – the City of Allentown - along with The Allentown Chamber board, our volunteers, and other downtown stakeholders – we will produce a high-caliber Blues music festival with a wide range of musical talent, food vendors and activities.

Allentown is proud to host this community event which features barbeque and a variety of other Lehigh Valley festival favorites.

Blues, Brews and Barbecue also features alcoholic drinks – domestic and craft brews (Allentown Brew Works, Bru Dad-dy's) cocktails and wine.

This event is open to the public free of charge.

Information will be posted on [DowntownAllentown.com](http://DowntownAllentown.com).

When: Saturday, June 24, 2023

Time: 12 Noon – 10 pm

Where: Hamilton Street from 5th to 9th streets and 7th Street North and South.



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