



**Ken  
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*Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times*

## Cost Breakdown

Time flies when you're not paying attention to it. It is probably better that way because when you pay close attention to some things it is just depressing. Cars can be very expensive when something goes wrong but they are also expensive when you break the total cost down by the length of time you operate it. The same is true with heating and cooling equipment. Not including the cost of fuel, a new heating or air conditioning system can cost close to \$1000 per year. In the past a premium system would last close 20 years and a basic system would last 10 years at a minimum. That could make the annual cost much closer to \$500 but those days are long gone. Today with costs increasing and quality decreasing it is doubtful that a new system will make the 20 year mark and that puts the annual cost much higher. It also makes maintenance more important because the operating margin for a system running higher pressures and temperatures due to poor air flow and dirty coils is very low. All of those conditions stress the system and eventually there is a leak or a failed motor and another expense to cover. The only way a homeowner can combat the high cost of repairs and a shortened lifespan of new equipment is to maintain it. It is also very important today that equipment be installed correctly. Air conditioners oversized for the duct system will cause blower motor failure. You may get one covered during the warranty period but you won't get a second one and the cost of these motors is very high. A contractor who doesn't match a system correctly or who gives you the larger system you asked for may be setting you up for failure. Just like packages of food getting smaller and the cost staying the same I believe the manufacturers of everything are removing materials in order to make the system less expensive to build. Thinner copper coils, less screws used in assembly and every other thing they can do to cut cost leaves us with no margin for misapplication and barely an operational unit from day 1. If I sound cynical it is because 40+ years of experience will allow a person to develop a sense of the way things are trending. That shows that we are not ever going back to the days of well-built equipment. We have to use the best systems we can find and keep them clean and covered with surge protection and hope for the best. It is anyone's guess what a new system will cost in 2035 and what the lifespan of it will be then. Air conditioning may be illegal by then for all we know. 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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## a WILD IN REVIEW

### As Suicide Rates Climb for Older Americans, Rep. Wild Supports Community Organizations Working to Save Lives

This week, I was deeply saddened to read new reporting on the increased suicide rates for older adults in our community. If you or a loved one are struggling, please know that you are not alone and help is out there. To be connected with a trained mental health professional, call or text 988.

Keeping our community safe and healthy – mentally and physically – is one of my main priorities in Congress. That's why I helped secure funding for the Local Outreach to Suicide Survivors (LOSS) team, which helps support recently bereaved individuals. When a suicide is reported in Lehigh County, the LOSS team is notified and will match the grieving family with a team member that can assist with processing and finding resources. I'm so incredibly grateful for the work this incredible team does to bring mental health out of the shadows and support families in our community experiencing unimaginable heartbreak.

### Rep. Wild Introduces Bipartisan Legislation to Extend Affordable Connectivity Program

On Wednesday, I joined a bipartisan group of my colleagues to introduce the Secure and Affordable Broadband Extension Act, which would renew the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP). Originally established under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which I was proud to help pass in the last Congress, the ACP has helped 1 in 7 households in our community save money on their monthly internet bills.

We are living in a digital age, and reliable internet access is crucial for being able to access telehealth appointments, attend virtual classes, and connect with family and loved ones. I've heard from individuals in all corners of our district who rely on the ACP to afford high-speed internet, and I'm committed to pursuing bipartisan solutions, like this bill, to renew this critical program.

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