



## Ken Field

Owner of Slate  
Belt Energy  
Services

*Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times*

### Humidity Facts

We get requests every fall and winter to install humidifiers on furnaces. I don't just go out and slap one on and take money because there is a lot for someone to know before they have one. Most of the ones I see are either installed wrong, wired wrong, or inoperable because they were never maintained. We can do the maintenance as part of our annual tuneups but most people say they will do it themselves and then never do. Some of the stuff growing inside poorly maintained humidifiers looks like it belongs in the black lagoon and it can't be healthy. Even when installed properly it is unlikely that a humidifier solves the problem it was intended to. If the air in the house is dry in the winter it is due to infiltration (air leakage). Outside air is very dry in the winter because cold air can't hold much moisture. If your house is leaky what happens is that warm moist air you have paid to heat and humidify leaks out the upper floors and through the attic and cold dry air enters the basement to replace it. It is a little scientific but not rocket science. As soon as that cold air gets in the house your furnace turns on to heat it up. Warm air CAN hold moisture and that causes the RELATIVE humidity to be low. If you think you need a humidifier, you really need to airseal your house. That would fix several problems at once. If you went camping in the summer and didn't have a cover on your cooler do you think your food would stay cool? It is no different for your home in the winter. I won't say that you can't airseal your own attic but I don't think most people will want to when they see what it involves. Adding the right kind of insulation can solve two problems at once. If cellulose insulation is blown into open spaces it will stop almost all air from flowing through that space. That's how insulation works but only cellulose will stop air leakage. Fiberglass is useless for that purpose. If air can't escape your home, then new air won't try to get in the lower level. The air you heat and cool will hang around much longer and so will humidity in the winter. Your fuel money will hang around longer too. So many aspects of energy usage are connected that you can't just address one thing in the middle and expect other things to fall in place.

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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