



Ken Field

Owner of Slate Belt Energy Services

Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times

How Long Will a House Last

100 years? Forever? I don't think anyone ever really gave much thought to that. I've worked on homes that are well over a hundred years old but most of them are stone or brick. One my son and I rebuilt was from 1873 and although the structure was good, everything else about it was not. Windows and doors needed replacement, electrical, plumbing, heating, and even major work was needed to make it energy efficient. We could have cut a lot of corners and still met the building code but my philosophy is that you need to look as far forward as possible to prevent the recurring nightmare of maintenance problems. It has been 15 years since we finished it and there have been very few problems. Ironically the most expensive one was the need to upgrade the air conditioning equipment because some parts were no longer available. It is more energy efficient than most new homes and even though it is near a major road, the sound of traffic barely makes it inside because of the technique we used to insulate it. I would expect this house to be standing 100 years from now.

Some of today's new homes are going to require some major expense too before they hit the 150 year mark. I can only imagine what the cost of energy will be in the year 2170. Does anyone but me think about stuff like this? I don't lose sleep over it but I try to envision what things will be like then. I can't imagine what the source of heat will be. The cost of electricity will probably be astronomical. Gas and oil may be outlawed. I can't even imagine what refrigerator will be in the air conditioning systems. On one hand I'm glad I will be long gone by then, but on the other hand, my family will still be here and I won't be able to help. I should probably worry about things in the near future and not those so far out but where do you draw the line? There is no shortage of things to worry about these days but the unknown is something not really worth worrying about. Having your home and all the systems in it up to date and well maintained relieves you of many worries. Methodically selecting repairs and prioritizing major upgrades will prevent a landslide of breakdowns that are always possible. A 5 year plan is reasonable with respect to mechanical equipment. Upgrade when major repairs are imminent and enjoy the peace of mind for a little while.

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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