



Ken Field

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Fuel Choices

Fuel prices are on the rise again and many of the blogs I follow have discussions about what is the best fuel to use for home heating. Weeding out the people who just have some sort of irrational thinking, like oil is stinky and gas explodes, is the first thing I do. Then get into the real things that should make someone choose a fuel to heat their home. First of all, natural gas is not available everywhere so that is off the table for many. If that would be someone's first preference because of being a utility and government having some control over the cost to the end user, then trying to find out if it may become available in that area in the future is important. Most furnaces can be converted from propane to natural gas very inexpensively. Converting an oil furnace to either gas is not so inexpensive. So if natural gas will be available in a few years, a propane furnace is a good choice because you can remove the tank someday and convert the appliances and just use natural gas. If the choice is oil or propane because of a rural location then deciding what else the fuel will be used for is important.

You can't cook or dry clothes with oil so if gas is your choice for those 2 things then propane is the best option. Propane furnaces also offer efficiencies above 90% and that is rare with an oil system. It isn't easy to compare fuel costs by the gallon between propane and oil because the amount of usable heat in a gallon of each is different. A big plus for both of those fuels is that if the power goes out, a small generator can power a propane or oil furnace where it would take a much larger one to operate a heat pump. Power outages are not as common today as they once were but you just never know when one will happen. It was devastating to Texas to lose power and be freezing at the same time. It will be years before everything there will be back to normal. If you already have a gas or oil system and it is 20-50 years old, there is no need to switch fuels to get a much better system. The newest furnaces for both fuels are very clean burning and efficient and as long as they are maintained, will be a good value. If you don't have a 1975 Rambler in your driveway, you shouldn't have a 1975 furnace in the basement.

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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Lehigh Valley Zoo Mourns The Loss Of Mexican Gray Wolf, Omega

By LVZOO

Schnecksville - The Lehigh Valley Zoo is saddened to share that its male wolf, Omega, has passed away this week due to cancer. Omega's quality of life and welfare had been carefully monitored by veterinarians and his keepers regarding a growth above his eye. Once animal care staff noticed the growth was impacting his welfare, the animal care team made the difficult decision to humanely euthanize him.

At almost 14 years old, Omega exceeded the median life expectancy by four years. He was an important part of the Mexican Gray Wolf Species Survival Program (SSP), which aims to release wolves bred in Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) zoos into the wild.

Mexican gray wolves are a subspecies of gray wolf, often referred to as "el lobo", and are the most endangered subspecies of wolf in the world. Just like each wolf is important in the pack, each wolf plays a vital role in maintaining nature's delicate balance. Staff and guests will greatly miss Omega and his memorable antics during carcass feeds, as well as chasing after his brothers in playful pack games.

During this time, animal care staff will be monitoring Magdalena, the Zoo's female wolf, because of changing pack dynamics to ensure she is adjusting. She may choose to stay off exhibit as she adjusts, so the Zoo greatly appreciate guests' understanding during this transition.

The LV Zoo, in conjunction with AZA, will begin searching and working on a timeline to bring new pack members to the Zoo to introduce to Magdalena. Following the SSP for Mexican gray wolves, the hope is to find her a suitable partner, as well.

LV Zoo is one of approximately 50 zoos and conservation centers helping to rehabilitate Mexican gray wolves. This subspecies was nearly brought to extinction by widespread trapping and poisoning in the early 1900s. After reintroducing Mexican gray wolves, there are a minimum of 163 in the wild and approximately 400 in the captive breeding program as of 2019.

LV Zoo is proud to support the recovery of the Mexican gray wolf population, and will continue to educate the public on these fascinating and beautiful animals in hopes they will one day have a sustainable wild population. By supporting AZA accredited institutions, individuals can help save species like the Mexican gray wolf.