

Supporting PA First Responders

By State Rep. Joe Emrick

BANGOR - With fire and emergency medical service organizations across the state struggling due to a lack of volunteers and financial resources, the House and Senate Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness committees held an informational meeting to discuss recommendations put forth late last year to address these challenges.

According to testimony offered at the meeting, the decline of volunteers in fire and EMS services across the state is having a significant impact on municipalities' ability to reliably and safely provide public safety services to their citizens.

Much of the decline in volunteers can be attributed to societal and economic changes, such as longer working hours and longer commutes. However, lawmakers

were encouraged to consider incentives such as tax credits or college loan forgiveness programs to help recruit new volunteers. Affordable and accessible training was also encouraged as a way to remove barriers to volunteering.

These were among more than two dozen broad recommendations offered by the Senate Resolution 6 Commission, which was charged with studying issues such as recruitment and retention, government support, innovation, training and operations, and more.

One of the report's recommendations, which requires insurers to reimburse ambulance companies for services provided even if no transport takes place, was signed into law last year. Lawmakers plan to build on that success this year as they prepare to introduce legislation implementing some additional recommendations.

UGI's Request To Raise Customers Rates

By Michael Ortoski

HARRISBURG - On Monday, April 22, the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission will hold public hearings on UGI's request to make changes to the average customer's monthly residential heating bill in individual regions as follows:

UGI Gas South - from \$62.45 to \$72.93 (a 16.8 percent increase).

UGI Gas North - from \$89.72 to \$97.37 (an 8.5 percent increase).

UGI Central - from \$93.68 to \$85.91 (an 8.3 percent reduction).

Northampton County customers are either in UGI Gas South or UGI Central. Please click on the photo below to see which region you are in.

The proposal would also extend the current temporary federal tax credit on customer bills for a 12-month period, beginning on the effective day of new rates, which would reduce the distribution rate portion of customer bills by 4.5 percent during that 12-month period.

The hearings will take place at 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. in Hearing Room 1 of the Commonwealth Keystone Building, 400 North St., Harrisburg.

You may participate in person or by telephone. In-person participation requires no further action.

To participate by telephone, please call 717-787-1399 by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 17 to register through the Office of Administrative Law Judge.



Eagle Scout Recognition

By Michael Ortoski

WEST END - Two Eagle Scouts were recognized by State Senator Mario Scavello and St. Rep. Marcia Hahn this past week.

Heath Gagner of Troop 74 in Bushkill Township and Roger Perkowski III of Troop 85 in Tannersville.

"Thank you both for demonstrating the highest ethic of service to our communities" said Scavello and Hahn.

For his Eagle project, Heath designed and built a fire pit and stage area for Schoeneck Moravian Church, including rock flooring, a stacked rock wall and crucifix. Roger added raised garden beds, soil and plants to the Major Paul Syverson Veterans Sanctuary in Jonas.

B	I	N	G	O
April 16 Portland Fire Co Starts 7pm	April 13 Immaculate Conception Doors 11am; Starts 1pm	April 17 Bushkill Twp Fire Co Doors 5pm Starts 7pm	April 14 St. Elizabeth Church Starts 1pm	April 15 Kunkletown Fire Co Progressive Jackpot - 7pm
April 18 Wind Gap Fire Co Doors 5pm; Starts 6:45pm				

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**Ken
Field**

*Owner of Slate
Belt Energy
Services*

Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times

Tighter Homes are Healthier

I recently read an article about a home builder in the Midwest who tests the tightness of the homes he is building at intervals throughout the construction process. Energy auditors have all the tools for that kind of testing but builders almost never do and rarely seem to care enough to even have the houses tested let alone do it themselves. To me, this guy is right on the money for building energy efficient homes for his customers. There are many areas that cannot be sealed after construction and those areas will impact the energy cost for that home and also the comfort. They didn't say how much time he spends testing and sealing but I would venture a guess that it is less time than it takes me to test and seal a home that is less than 5 years old. Not to mention that he seals every leak at the entry point and not where the air finally reaches the living space. His end result is a home that usually far exceeds the standard (minimum acceptable) for new construction and usually meets or beats the leakage rate for a passive house.

When construction is finished, they take one last test and then size a ventilator for just the right amount of fresh air and the home is done. Uneducated people always jump in and say "I don't want a house that is too tight" and this is a statement that really agitates me because I see it as an excuse to allow contractors to be sloppy. The air that typically leaks into a home passes over a lot of things that you would not want in contact with your lungs and the dust you find on your furniture is usually proof of that. Everything from pollen to drywall dust to fiberglass and certainly air that has been filtered through rodent nests and feces. I will take a tight house that brings clean air in and filters it to meet the ventilation standard any day over one that just leaks air. Some homes don't even need an energy recovery ventilator. All they need is a timer on a bath fan to operate it for a few hours and the standard is met. So for those who use the lame excuse of not wanting to build something too tight, you really have to try hard to get it there. Much harder than the best work of any builder I have seen in our area.

If I find a builder who can build a tight home, I will endorse them and share their name with my readers.

Ken Field is the owner of Field's Service, Inc. and Slate Belt Energy Services. He has over 40 years of experience in heating, air conditioning and is certificated by RESNET and BPI in various areas of energy conservation. He can be reached at 610-599-8832 or at www.SlateBeltEnergy.com

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You're Invited to an Information Session



**Join Pastor Frank Pons, Sarah Marie White, & Pastor
Josue Lopez from the Blessing the Children
Ministry Orphanage to learn about our mission.**

Wednesday May 1, 2019

@ 6:00 PM

@ Slate Belt Commerce

187 Blue Valley Dr.

Bangor, PA 18013

Refreshments will be served. Someone
will win a door prize!

**RSVP by April 26th to Sarah Marie White
(484) 707-3660**

Sarahcakes101@gmail.com

**EARLY LEARNING IS
NO SMALL MATTER**

**Thursday, May 16
6 PM - 9 PM**

**The Grand Eastonian
140 Northampton St.
Easton, PA 18042**



Free film screening and panel discussion sponsored by the Lehigh and Northampton Chapter of PennAEYC. Please go to Eventbrite to get your free ticket.

Film Screening And Panel Discussion on 'No Small Matter'

By Jan Marie Schwartz / VP of Public Policy

Lehigh and Northampton Chapter of PennAEYC

EASTON - The Lehigh and Northampton Chapter of the Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children (PennAEYC) is excited to be hosting a film screening and panel discussion for the film No Small Matter, the first feature documentary to explore the most overlooked, underestimated, and powerful force for good in America today: early childhood education.

Through poignant stories and surprising humor, the film lays out the overwhelming evidence for the importance of the first five years, and reveals how our failure to act on that evidence has resulted in an everyday crisis for American families, and a slow-motion catastrophe for the county.

We hope you can join us for this important event: DATE: Thursday, May 16, 2019, 6 pm - 9 pm

LOCATION: The Grand Eastonian, 140 Northampton St., Easton, PA

TICKETS: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/no-small-matter-film-screening-and-panel-discussion-tickets-59119181062>

TRAILER: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Shm-KRh4LFg>

This is your chance to be part of a national movement that highlights the importance of early childhood education in the Lehigh Valley. Please feel free to share this invitation with your networks.

Tenant Rights and Responsibilities Workshop

By Steve Reider

BANGOR - Slate Belt Rising will be hosting a Tenant Rights and Responsibilities Workshop on Saturday, April 27th from 9 am until 12 pm at William Pensyl Social Hall in Portland, PA. Staff from North Penn Legal Services and the Housing Equality Center of Pennsylvania will provide presentations to help educate individuals on their rights as tenants. Registration for this event is required, the deadline to register is Friday, April 19th. For additional information and to register contact Slate Belt Rising Director Stephen Reider at 484-523-0900 or sreider@caclv.org.