



## Ken Field

Owner of Slate  
Belt Energy  
Services

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### Plan Ahead

There are a lot of inefficient oil systems still in operation. I know, I take care of a lot of them.

For years I have shared information about more efficient oil systems with my customers and some have taken my advice and hired me to install one. The ones that also produce hot water for the faucets are the easiest ones to make much more efficient. When oil was

\$2.00 per gallon the savings of making an upgrade that saved the average household 15 or 20% was probably less than \$500 per year. Now it is much closer to \$1000. I don't know if oil will stay at or above \$5/gallon but I don't have much confidence that we will see \$2/gallon anytime soon. The investment in energy savings isn't just about oil either. Electricity is generated with fossil fuels and they all follow each other. Rate hikes in electricity up to 39% have been announced already. So for those

who paid \$700 electric bills every month this winter, that will be close to \$1000 next winter. If you see the handwriting on the wall, you should really do something to avert the disaster that is ahead. If you need to finance a system, you should also observe the trend in interest rates. They are not going any lower or even staying as low as they have been. What seems like a sales pitch now might seem like an early tip from an insider later.

Some homes I have weatherized and upgraded have cut energy costs in half. That was such a bold statement that I have been questioned by the Better Business Bureau as to how I could make that claim. I just gave them the phone number of a couple customers who realized those savings and haven't been bothered again. Not everyone can save that kind of money but there are several thousand really inefficient homes within my service area. Snow is never seen on these roofs. Eventually, everyone will be hunkered into a single room or two with an electric heater all winter. And there will be damage to the home from things freezing. Nobody can pull money out of thin air to upgrade their home but it is probably the biggest single investment most people ever make in their life, except possibly for their summer home, and their boat.

Now is the time to have an energy survey done to prepare for the increase in energy cost and also to beat the interest rates. Next winter is coming like a freight train.

*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*

## LIHEAP Extended

Rep. Ann Flood

NAZARETH - The LIHEAP season has been extended by two weeks, from May 6 to May 20, 2022, allowing additional households the opportunity to apply for LIHEAP Cash and LIHEAP Crisis benefits.

LIHEAP ExtendedThe Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is a federally funded program administered by DHS that provides assistance for home heating bills so low-income Pennsylvanians can stay warm and safe in their homes. Assistance is available for renters and homeowners, and the LIHEAP application season is currently open until May 20, 2022.

DHS has been able to provide increased benefits for this extended LIHEAP season due to the availability of funds through the federal American Rescue Plan Act. The minimum cash grant for LIHEAP is \$500, and the maximum cash grant is \$1,500. Those who need the LIHEAP crisis grant – the benefit for people who meet the poverty limits and are in jeopardy of having their heating utility service terminated or have less than two

weeks' worth of fuel – can receive a maximum grant of \$1,200. LIHEAP is distributed directly to a household's utility company or home heating fuel provider in the form of a grant, so the individual or households do not have to repay assistance.

The income limit for the program is 150 percent of the Federal Poverty Limit. For a household of four, this would be \$39,750 gross income per year. Pennsylvanians do not need to know their own eligibility in order to apply for these programs. Those who applied and were denied previously but have experienced a change in circumstances can reapply.

The Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) helps Pennsylvanians with low incomes maintain access to drinking and wastewater services. Assistance is available for families who have past due water bills, had their service terminated, or received a notice indicating that their service will be terminated in the next 60 days. Households can receive LIHWAP grants for both drinking water service and wastewater service. Grants are issued directly to water service providers, and families must meet income requirements.

LIHWAP is a new, temporary assistance program established through the American Rescue Plan Act and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021. These funds are part of the nation's continued response to families experiencing financial difficulties due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Pennsylvania received approximately \$43.2 million to assist families who have lost or are at risk of losing water service in their homes.

Pennsylvanians can apply for LIHEAP, LIHWAP, and other public assistance programs online at [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us) and can apply for Medical Assistance (MA) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by phone at 1-866-550-4355. On-site County Assistance Office (CAO) services are available if clients cannot access online services or need assistance that cannot be accessed through the COMPASS website, the myCOMPASS PA mobile app, or by calling the Customer Service Centers at 1-877-395-8930.

**DO YOU HAVE  
OUTSTANDING  
HOME  
HEATING  
BILLS?**

**THERE'S  
STILL TIME!  
APPLY TODAY  
FOR THE HELP  
YOU NEED.**

**LEARN MORE AT [DHS.PA.GOV/LIHEAP](http://DHS.PA.GOV/LIHEAP)**



Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program

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