

Limited Access To High-speed Internet Is Affecting Local Emergency Responders

By Kristine Bush

STROUDSBURG – As part of an ongoing series of public hearings across the state, the Senate Communications and Technology Committee will conduct a public hearing on Tuesday, September 3 to receive testimony on how limited access to high-speed internet is affecting local emergency responders and the medical community.

The hearing is being held at the request of Senator Mario Scavello (R-Monroe/Northampton). “I am thrilled the Senate Communications and Technology Committee is coming to the 40th Senatorial District to host a public hearing on broadband,” Scavello said. “As a Senator representing rural communities, lack of broadband access limits online educational, business and entrepreneurial opportunities for my constituents. In some cases, greater broadband access may give commuters in my district better quality of life with the opportunity to work from home.”

The committee, chaired by Senator Kristin Phillips-Hill (R-York), is conducting a series of hearings across the state to receive feedback from experts in a variety of fields on how limited access to high-speed internet affects different industries and public services across the state.

“We already heard how our economic competitiveness is hampered by lack of broadband connection as well as overarching concerns from local governments

at our first hearing,” Phillips-Hill said. “I am grateful that Senator Scavello requested this important public hearing to learn more about our state’s digital divide and its impact on our first responders and medical professionals.”

The public hearing will start at 1 p.m. and will be held at the Monroe County Safety Center, located at 100 Gypsum Road in Stroudsburg.

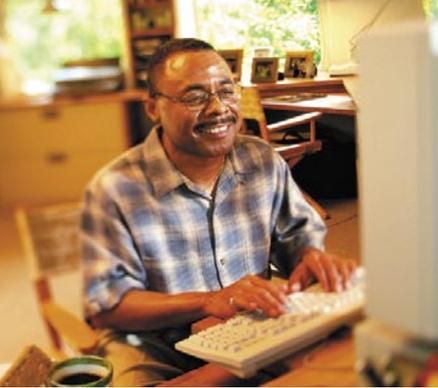
You can learn more about the public hearing, view the agenda and read testimony at communications.pasenategop.com.





FRAUD WATCH NETWORK

Work from Home Scams



Today’s work world is vastly different than when Labor Day was first celebrated more than 130 years ago. Today, more and more people are working from home for companies halfway around the country or even the globe. But with this new flexibility comes a new risk of falling victim to scammers looking to take advantage of people wanting to work from home. The scams can promise work on medical billing, data entry or starting an online business, but they all require paying something up front. Once you start paying, the requests for more money for training never stop and in return you get a lot of useless information or requests to recruit more people into the scheme.

There are genuine work-from-home jobs out there. The trick is knowing how to spot the real opportunities in a sea of empty — and costly — promises. Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam.

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Visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork or call the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline at 1-877-908-3360 to report a scam or get help if you’ve fallen victim.

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Facing the Unknown

Dealing with the unknown can be terrifying no matter what kind of unknown it is. If you knew what it was it wouldn't be unknown anymore. If it is a breakdown with your air conditioner you might immediately think the worst and dread hearing that it will need to be replaced or that it needs an expensive repair. The truth is that very few repairs we do on air conditioners are that expensive. Some of course are major and there is no way around a replacement. One benefit of having maintenance performed annually is that you can get advanced warning when your system is reaching the end of its life. We check the condition of some internal components that give us a very good indication of when to expect a system to fail or need an expensive repair. The tool we use measures the condition of the motor inside the compressor in the outdoor unit and it is the most expensive part to replace on any air conditioner or heat pump. It is basically the heart of the system. If we see the test reading in the yellow range on our meter we can give you advanced warning that system will need replacement within a few years. If we see the reading in the red range on our meter, we recommend replacement but because the system is still running, it gives you time to budget for that and also to select the system you would like to have in place of the failing one. It won't come as a complete shock when the system fails.

The unknown also applied to dealing with new contractors. You never know what to expect when a new company responds to your home for service. Of course you hope for the best, but until you actually meet and interact with them, you may be apprehensive. Once you have built up a level of trust, you don't have to worry about whether you will be treated fairly and honestly. Removing that unknown is huge when it comes to expenses that can accompany ownership of complex systems like heat pumps. Like the old saying goes "It's not what you know, it's who you know". If you know a reputable contractor, you don't need to know all the ins and outs of every piece of equipment in your home. You just need to know when to pick up the phone and call for help. There are plenty of unknowns worth stressing about but home maintenance does not have to be one of them.

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

New Farmers Market Nutrition Program App

By Michael Ortoski

SLATE BELT - Pennsylvanians with Senior or WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program checks can easily find participating markets and farm stands through the PA FMNP Locator app. It's available at the Apple Store & Google Play.



Farmers Market Nutrition Programs

The WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (SFMNP) provide WIC recipients and low income seniors with fresh, nutritious, unprepared, locally grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs from approved farmers' in Pennsylvania.

Farmers Accepting the Checks

Only farmers authorized by the State agency may accept and redeem FMNP and SFMNP checks. Individuals who exclusively sell produce grown by someone else or purchased from a wholesale distributor cannot be authorized to par-

ticipate in the FMNP. An application can be found under the Forms link entitled Application for "Eligible Farmer" status.

Recipient Eligibility

FMNP - Recipients must be on the WIC program to receive this benefit. Receive the benefit during quarterly WIC visit (May - September)

SFMNP - Seniors must be 60 or older by December 31st of the program year and meet the income eligibility guidelines. Income eligibility is basis on 185% of the federal poverty income guidelines. The guidelines are published each year by the United States Department of Agriculture. Income includes interest, social security, wages, etc..

How to Apply

Call your County Aging office to find out when and where they are distributing the checks/vouchers. Available on first come first serve basis.

How the Program Works for Recipients

Recipients are given a list of participating farmers and farmers' markets when they receive their checks. These checks are redeemed for fresh fruits and vegetables grown in Pennsylvania. Each eligible recipient receives 4 - \$5.00 SFMNP checks to redeem at a qualified farmers' markets or roadside stands. There are over 1,150 FMNP participating farmers at 828 farm stands and 202 farmers' markets in Pennsylvania.

Where to use Checks

Visit www.pafmnp.pa.gov to find a market close by that accepts the FMNP checks. When you are at the market look for the white FMNP signs to know which vendors will accept the checks.

What to Buy

The checks can be redeemed for Pennsylvania fresh fruits and vegetables only. No processed food like jams, honey, nuts, cider or baked goods. Also citrus and other tropical fruits are not allowed.

For more info go to :

<https://wic.health.pa.gov/pawic/FarmerMarketNutritionProgram.aspx>

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