



Ken Field

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Infrastructure

I'm not an expert on infrastructure but I drive the roads and keep abreast of things that are publicized about it and if the power grid is anything like the roads, we may be in trouble. There is a lot of talk about everything going electric, especially cars and it will take a lot of power to charge these vehicles. It unlikely that solar and wind power could ever handle that amount of load, especially at night when many people will be charging their cars. The electric companies are not government owned, they are for profit entities even though they have to ask permission to increase their rates. There is no profit in trimming trees away from power lines and upgrading things if everything is working. I'm sure they have plans in the works to prevent any major catastrophes but I'm not convinced they are ready for an additional 35-40% demand for their product. Even if the generation end of their system could produce it, I'm not confident their transmission lines and substations are built to handle it.

Just the load from air conditioners has strained some areas of the power grid recently. I saw at least 2 news articles about power companies using the remote control of air conditioners to reduce peak load on their system in the last couple weeks. Anyone who signed up for their rebate program had their air conditioner fitted with a device that could be controlled by the power company. One rebate I saw was \$30 per year. That sounds great but when they use it and your house overheats, you may be upset. One article was about senior citizens living in mobile homes.

Mobile homes are pretty thin all around and they heat up very quickly in the summer heat so I'm sure there were some uncomfortable residents in that place.

I've also seen posted from different areas requesting that people not charge their cars during some peak times. I have the feeling that we are at the beginning of something that could take some time to get resolved. I would not be in favor of the government having any more control over the power grid than they do now because they seem to make everything cost more when they get involved and usually the quality of things goes downhill. Are the power companies too big to fail? That may be the next bailout coming down the line. Maybe I'm a cynic but being at the very end of the line when it comes to information makes me wonder if we actually get to hear everything or just things that won't make us nervous.

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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