



L-R David Fagerstrom, Rocco Del Vecchio, Carlton Snyder, State Representative Marcia Hahn, Taylor Munoz – representative from State Senator Mario Scavello's Office, Lamont McClure, and Jim Hunter.

Historic Ties to Slate Belt Reinforces Merchants Bank's Commitment

By Sue Kovacs

BANGOR - It is expected that an organization with historical ties in the Slate Belt, specifically Bangor, would be the first to step up to support its community. Merchants Bank does just that. For years, the Bank has offered support through donations and volunteers.

The Slate Belt's rich history was the result of slate mining, employing 4,000 miners and producing 140 million square feet of slate, in the early 1900s. By 1929, virtually all the mines had closed, leaving the remaining businesses and residents to rebuild its economic infrastructure. Merchants Bank's nearly 130 years, with beginnings in Bangor, survived the birth and decline of the region and continues to sustain its corporate responsibility to revitalize the Slate Belt.

The economy of four towns, Wind Gap, Pen Argyl, Bangor, and Portland that make up the Slate Belt weighs heavily on its residents and businesses who support the region. The Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley (CACLV) recognized a community in need and helped to establish the Slate Belt Rising (SBR). As described by SBR, its mission is "to galvanize the boroughs of Wind Gap, Pen Argyl, Bangor, and Portland to capitalize on their shared heritage and traditions, the natural beauty of the Slate Belt, and the commercial potential provided by the proximity to major roadways in order to increase economic opportunity in the region, reduce poverty, eliminate blight, and improve the overall quality of life".

Merchants Bank partnered with CACLV, along with other organizations and financial institutions, to raise the needed funding to establish SBR. In this effort, the Bank continues to provide consultation, guidance, volunteers, and other resources to advance the Slate Belt community further.

Since 2017, Slate Belt Rising funded nearly \$100,000 for Commercial Façade Improvements, Community Events, Youth Programs, and Streetscape Improvements.

Indeed, the work of SBR is impressive but is not the only organization or coalition working toward the improvement of the region. Recently, the Slate Belt Branch of the Greater Valley YMCA broke ground on construction for a new pool, gymnasium, and childcare wing. Merchants Bank has long supported the Slate Belt Branch of the Greater Valley YMCA since its opening in 2015 and assisted in funding this massive project.

"Our mission is to support and strengthen the communities where we work and live. Partnering with businesses and organizations that share our compassion for the Slate Belt and its residents help fulfill that mission. Our commitment is greatly influenced by the history we share with the community, says Rocco Del Vecchio, President/CEO.

Del Vecchio adds, There are numerous groups and organizations, small and large, who share responsibility in ensuring the economic vitality of the region. Our Bank and staff depend on us to be active in the Slate Belt. We not only have a business stake in the region, but our employees and their families work and live in the area they call home. Their contribution impacts residents and businesses who also consider this their home."

About Merchants Bank

Established in 1890, Merchants Bank is a locally owned and operated community bank. Headquartered in Bangor, PA, Merchants has two branch offices in Bangor and additional offices throughout the Lehigh Valley, including Mount Bethel, Wind Gap, Nazareth, Forks Township, Martins Creek, Easton and Bethlehem, PA. In 2013 the Bank was recognized for its community involvement and volunteerism through two awards: Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce's The Spirit of Forks Award as well as The Volunteer Center of the Lehigh Valley's Spirit of Volunteerism Award. MNB Investment Services is a division of the bank and offers investment and wealth management financial services. For more information, please visit www.merchantsbangor.com.



Special National Weather Service Presentation Understanding NOAA Forecast Tools and Where to Find Them

Tuesday September 10th, 2-3pm or 7-8 pm

Nurture Nature Center
518 Northampton Street, Easton, PA 18042

National Weather Service forecast tools provide detailed weather information vital to municipal efforts in preparing for and managing natural hazards and disasters in local communities.

But first, municipal leaders and officials and residents need to know where to find the information, how to understand the tools and who to contact with questions.

Join Nurture Nature Center for a presentation from staff with the NWS Philadelphia/Mt. Holly Weather Forecast Office to gain a better understanding of forecast tools and how they can support community efforts.

Events are free. For more information, to RSVP, or if you cannot attend in person but would like to participate remotely via webinar email ksemmens@nurturenature.org.



www.nurturenaturecenter.org

This event is part of the CREATE Resilience project funded under award NA18SEC0080005 from the Environmental Literacy Program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce. The statements, findings, conclusions and recommendations are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of NOAA or the U.S. Department of Commerce.



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Ken Field

Owner of Slate Belt Energy Services



Exclusively in the Blue Valley Times

Time Marches On

Technology moves so rapidly today that obsolescence is inevitable. I remember when VHS was the standard for videotape and we figured it would be a keeper. Then mini VHS recorders came along. Then DVDs. The digital stuff really changed the game because you no longer needed a 15 lb. monster on your shoulder to save memories. Almost all of that equipment is garbage today. I'm actually surprised that you can't record to the cloud with a module implanted in your temple yet.

10 years ago CFL light bulbs looked like they were going to make the incandescent bulb obsolete but before they even got a toehold, the LED blew them both away. There was a moment when the pin-based CFL bulb was recognized for its uniqueness but now even those can be replaced with an LED.

I used to think it must have been pretty cool for the people born in the early 1900s to see how far technology came. From the first automobile to airplanes to telephones to computers and then to where we are today. If you are old enough to be in that group, you may be amazed but you more likely are shocked at how spoiled people are today. I was born in the 1950s and I work in a lot of homes that were built around that time. None of them had air conditioning because it wasn't invented yet. There wasn't a central AC system for homes until the 70s. Most of those systems have been replaced twice already and the technology continues to improve. Unfortunately the workmanship seems to be getting worse on many aspects of the systems and the original design is not being modified to meet the requirements of modern equipment.

When I started in this business it seems like people only needed an 'emergency' service call in the dead of winter so their pipes didn't freeze. After hours calls for air conditioning service were extremely rare and usually health related. Today it seems that a two degree deviation in room temperature at 10PM in any season needs attention before daybreak. I still have trouble feeling the urgency but it is part of the job.

It's anybody's guess what kind of devices future generations will have to make their life 'better' but it's a sure bet that comfort will continue to be a requirement for every home. I don't see my line of work getting any easier though because the equipment is getting more complex every year. Maybe one day I will be able to troubleshoot a system remotely from the comfort of my office and send out a drone to repair it, if I can understand how to operate it all.

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

Hahn to Host Shredding Event

By Michael Ortoski

HARRISBURG – What's the best way to dispose of important papers? State Rep. Marcia Hahn

(R-Bushkill Township) has the answer.

On Saturday, Sept. 21, she will be hosting a shredding event from 10 a.m. to noon at Moore Elementary School, 2835 Mountain View Drive in Bath.

"Opinions differ on how long you should hold on to copies of valuable documents such as tax returns," Hahn said. "If you do choose to dispose of them, what's the best way to get rid of them? This is the perfect event for you to do away with valuable paperwork that is currently cluttering your house."

Common types of unwanted items that should be shredded may include credit card statements or applications, bank statements, canceled checks, old income tax information, insurance

and medical records, and other materials with identifying personal information like Social Security, credit card or bank account numbers.

"Leaving these documents sitting around is a security risk," she added. "It's also unsafe to throw these papers in the trash, especially old receipts from purchases. Anyone could go 'dumpster diving,' find something with your credit card number on it and cause tremendous disruption in your personal life."

Phonebooks, newspapers and bound books cannot be accepted and there is a five-box limit of paperwork to be shredded per household. This event is for residents only (no businesses, please).

Any questions about this or any legislative issue should be directed to Hahn's district office by calling 610.746.2100.

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SEPTEMBER 29, 2019

Road Rally Scavenger Hunt 9am-12pm

REGISTRATION DEADLINE SEPTEMBER 6, 2019 (no day off)

\$40 per car of 4 people

OVER \$1,000 IN PRIZES



The Slate Belt Bash is a Community Event

September 29 from 11am to 4pm

There will be food, family fun and live music.

There will be food trucks, beer and wine provided by Bangor Trust Brewing and Franklin Hill Vineyard, FREE games for kids and teens, and live music from 2 local bands.

For more information or to register for the Road Rally Scavenger Hunt contact: Stephen at 484-523-0900 or

visit www.slatebeltrising.org for more info.

Each team member registered for the Road Rally Scavenger Hunt will receive a registration gift handed out at check in.

