



Ken Field

Owner of Slate Belt Energy Services

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Are the Good Times Really Over for Good

In the last year and a half a lot has changed. One thing hasn't changed and that is me. I still hate excuses no matter how elaborate they sound. I hate the saying "I didn't have time to do that" because what that means is you didn't make time for it. One thing that people have had in the last year is time. Many have worked every day and received no extra reward for being essential to the operation of a business. Lots of others had some time off with extra pay. Now I say it's time to get back to work. The supply chain is fractured and people on both ends of it are disenfranchised. I can't install what I can't get. I can't get what I can't order and I can't order some things unless I can get someone on the phone. As far as I know you can't get COVID over the phone but whenever I call a supplier it seems that I get the "due to higher than normal call volumes you may experience a longer than normal wait time" message. Some even say "your expected wait time is" then go on to let you know how many moons it will be by the time you ever speak to a human being. Why don't they just say "we are following the Walmart checkout staffing profile for our operators. After there are 100 people in line, we will hire a second operator." I order whatever I can online from my suppliers and many have online inventory so I can be sure they have what I need before I finish the transaction. However, even online ordering can go wrong, as I found out last week. I ordered a boiler and the inventory said they had 4. When it didn't show up in a few days I called and spent my lunch break on hold until I was told the others were sold and mine was lost. I don't know how someone can lose an 800 lb. boiler but mine was MIA. It turned up a few days later in Maryland and it took another 3 days to get to me. Meanwhile I have to offer this information to my customer. No excuse, just the facts about the pathetic nature of the supply chain.

I sure hope we get a handle on the problems with customer service and the supply chain before people lose their patience. I never heard that apathy was a side effect of COVID but that seems to be the real pandemic.

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

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area announces \$6.5 Million infrastructure investment to overhaul a main thoroughfare

By Kathy Sandt

BUSHKILL, PA- The most heavily travelled section of the most heavily travelled road in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area is about to receive a major upgrade made possible by the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA). Work on a \$6.5 million project to completely rehabilitate a seven-mile section of US Route 209 will begin in the spring of 2022 and is expected to be completed by the end of next year. It will be the first phase of a \$21.5 million project to improve the park's primary north-south route on the Pennsylvania side.

"This road project will modernize a vital piece of the park's infrastructure and enhance safety and access for the millions of people who visit Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area each year and for local residents and commuters who use this road each day," said Park Superintendent Sula Jacobs. "It will address one of the largest and most expensive infrastructure needs in the park. Route 209 is top-priority road that serves as an emergency route for local communities and provides access to those communities and to popular recreational facilities located along the corridor, however it is currently in very poor condition with failing pavement, poor drainage, and numerous potholes."

In this phase of the Route 209 project, the entire stretch of road between mile marker 0 in Middle Smithfield Township, Monroe County and mile marker 7 in Lehman Township, Pike County will be rehabilitated. Work will include milling the existing pavement, conducting full depth patch repair and spot base repair, culvert replacement, reconstruction of shoulders and line striping. The repair of the road surface, subsurface and drainage systems will extend the life of the road, eliminate the ongoing cost of frequent patching of potholes and other temporary corrective measures, and improve safety for motorists and bicyclists, including correcting the steep drop-offs on the road's shoulders.

The project is being financed through GAOA's National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund which, along with the recently passed Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and other construction funding sources, is part of a concerted effort to address the large maintenance backlog in national parks. When completed, this project is expected to eliminate \$16.8 million of the maintenance backlog.

Supported by revenue from energy development, GAOA provides up to \$1.9 billion per year for five years to make significant enhancements in national parks and other public lands to ensure their preservation and provide opportunities for recreation, education, and enjoyment for current and future visitors.

Most of the park's maintenance backlog is related to its 84 miles of paved roads, parking lots, and bridges. In 2020, the park had 4.1 million visitors, making it the tenth most-visited national park in the country. Park visitors spent \$144 million in local communities which supported 1,970 jobs and contributed a total economic output of \$212 million in communities within 60 miles of the park. Route 209 is a critical artery for businesses in gateway communities that depend on visitor spending.

For more information on Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, call (570) 426-2452; visit our website at www.nps.gov/dewa; or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/DelWaterGapNPS and Instagram at www.instagram.com/DelWaterGapNPS.





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