

The News of Burlingame Hills

A publication of Burlingame Hills Improvement Association, Inc.

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Adventures of buying a heat pump

Considerable local and Federal incentives available

Editor's note: this article is one person's experience and is not meant to be construed as a recommendation or as a reason to replace the research needed to find a system, HVAC contractor, and incentives that best meet your needs.

By Steve Epstein

In May, my natural gas furnace died. In doing my due diligence, I learned that a heat pump makes a lot of sense in our mild climate: greatly increased efficiency means lower cost while adding cooling on those hot summer days.

Heat pumps have two main parts: an indoor air handler unit and an outdoor air compressor unit.

There are two types of heat pumps that qualify for Federal and local incentives: two speed and variable speed systems. Two speed systems operate at either 70% or 100% of capacity and are louder and less efficient. Variable speed systems actually have three speeds: 30%, 70%, and 100% of capacity.

For most needs in our mild climate (assuming a well-insulated house), the system can run at 30%, saving money (by using less electricity) over time while maintaining a constant temperature. I was able to justify the higher upfront cost for a variable speed system.

The efficiency scale used by the Federal government is called "SEER2". A higher SEER2 rating means more efficiency. I found each additional unit of SEER2 efficiency to cost about \$1,500, so it was very

important to know how much money I would save annually with each incremental SEER2 increase.

After considerable research, including conversations with HVAC contractors, I was unable to find a reliable answer. Therefore, I chose the variable speed unit with the lowest SEER2 rating, which was 18. This was still much higher than traditional furnaces and it more than met the requirements for Federal and local incentives.

Consumer Reports rated Trane and American Standard, both made by Mitsubishi, the highest for customer satisfaction. I went with American Standard from Innovative Mechanics.

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Burglaries down in The Hills

As of October, burglaries are trending toward the normal rate of four to six per year among our community of 850 homes. This comes as a welcome development after twelve months of above-average home burglaries — nearly double the annual rate for the prior ten years.

Our community has experienced four burglaries during the first nine-and-half months of 2024: two homes on La Strada Court, off Skyline Boulevard, in early-January and one on the 2800 block of Adeline Drive in mid-January.

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You're invited!

66th Annual Meeting

Burlingame Hills Improvement Association

Monday, November 4

Special guest:

Sheriff's Chief Eamonn Allen

Please join us to learn the latest community news. You will have ample opportunity to ask questions and share your concerns.

6:30pm check-in; 7pm call to order

**Burlingame Community Center,
850 Burlingame Avenue**

Renew online (preferred) or arrive early to pay your annual dues (just \$20) with cash and check

Plenty of on and off-street parking
Door prizes!! Refreshments served

Burlingame Hills and San Mateo County Urgent Announcements

If you are not receiving periodic Burlingame Hills Urgent Announcements, then be sure to contact BHIA Safety Committee Chairperson Steve Epstein at steve@burlingamehills.org or (650) 777-7899 (home).

For San Mateo County Urgent Announcements, visit: smcalert.info