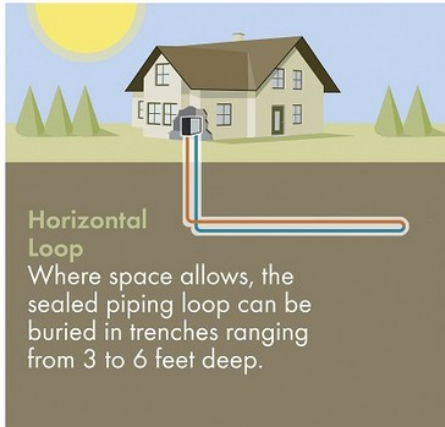


Special Advertising Feature

More Fairfield County Homebuyers Consider Geothermal Solution

by Tom Renner Neighbors 2 hours ago



An illustration shows how a geothermal unit heats homes. Photo Credit: Contributed by DEPCO

FAIRFIELD COUNTY, Conn. – Walter Cromwell says nearly 30 percent of new homebuyers are requesting geothermal units to heat their homes. As prices rise for home heating oil, the owner of Country Club Homes in Wilton thinks the number will continue to climb.

“The cost benefit wasn’t there before,” Cromwell said. “With oil prices going higher and higher, it’s starting to come into its own. It’s not a new technology. It’s been around a long time. People are asking more about it, and the word is getting out. Plus, it feels good if you’re heating your house and not using oil.”

Geothermal heating and cooling units take heat stored in the ground and move it into the house via a pump. “It’s taking heat from one point to another,” said Steve DePietro of [DEPCO Comfort Solutions](#). The Plainville-based business has been installing geothermal systems since

1997. “It’s not destroying anything or creating it. It’s picking up the heat from the sun and transferring it back to the building.”

DePietro says many people ask him, “How do you get a 50 degree ground hot enough to heat a house?” The answer, he said, is compressing that heat. “We’re taking it out of the ground and forcing it into a small area,” he said. “We can get temperatures out of the ground in the 100s. I was even skeptical. But if the units are installed properly – and that’s one of the keys – the return on investment is unbelievable.”

A geothermal system also eliminates the need for air conditioning. DePietro said a cost analysis on a 10,000 square foot home showed the operating costs for a geothermal system are about \$4,800. The same home would require about \$14,000 in energy costs for heating oil and air conditioning.

“Those are substantial savings,” DePietro said. “And there are fewer maintenance costs. There are no filters or combustion chambers. There are a couple of coils and a compressor. There are very few parts.”

Cromwell said homeowners who maintain a regular thermostat setting realize the most benefit. “If you move it up and down, it’s not that efficient,” he said. “That’s the only negative of the system. Otherwise it’s a great way to heat your home. People are very pleased with how much lower their energy bills are.”

Cromwell said geothermal systems are particularly valuable for new construction. A 30 percent federal government rebate adds to the incentive.

DePietro said DEPCO also converts many homes from heating oil to geothermal.

DePietro added that poorly insulated homes will also not reap benefits from a geothermal unit. “The first step is to get an energy audit to evaluate the house,” he said. “Keeping the house tight is the biggest key to energy efficiency.”

Besides cost savings, geothermal units also leave a much smaller environmental impact. DePietro said his company installs wells that can go as deep as 450 feet. A 10,000 square foot home will need four or five wells for a geothermal system. “There’s no use for oil or burning fossil fuels,” DePietro said. “It is becoming more green as we go.”

Homeowners and buyers are increasingly conscious of their carbon footprint. Country Club Homes can help with all facets, including how to situate the home to take advantage of slope, sunlight and tree shade; building with as little waste as possible; environmentally friendly products; improving the air quality within the home and constructing well insulated homes that are properly ventilated.

“As long as energy is high, I think we’ll see more people interested in geothermal units,” DePietro said. “In New England, we pay high energy bills due to the rigorous winters and the hot, humid summers. A geothermal unit can take care of both of those issues, and save money doing it.”

For more information about geothermal units and green and energy efficient buildings, visit the Country Club Homes [website](#).

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