

# ENERGY SAVING IDEAS

## The Geothermal Alternative To Traditional Heating And Cooling Technology

(NAPSA)—Homeowners looking to reduce their utility bills are beginning to explore more-efficient alternatives—like solar panels and geothermal systems—to traditional technology to heat and cool their homes.

Although solar panels are primarily used to generate electricity, homeowners have begun to expand the functionality of solar energy to heat and cool their homes as well. However, the success of solar panels depends on the climate and the location of the home. Homeowners living in the Southwest, which generally gets up to 300 days of sunshine a year, would benefit more from solar panels than residents of the Northeast, where it's only sunny about 50 percent of the time.

Geothermal, on the other hand, relies on temperatures beneath the ground's surface, which remain constant all year long, regardless of the location. A geothermal system consists of pipes that reach beneath the frost line. To warm the home, the system utilizes a compressor to pull the heat from underground and circulates it through the home as either forced air or hot water for radiant heat. The process is reversed when the home needs to be cooled: The compressor removes heat from inside the home and transfers it back to the pipes. The remaining cool air is circulated throughout the home.

Homeowners should also consider costs of the two systems. Solar systems produce a limited amount of energy per square foot and take up a considerable amount of space. In addition, accommodating the heating and cooling needs in a home requires a large number of costly solar panels, while just one geothermal heat pump can effectively cool and heat an entire home.



**Most geothermal systems can heat water more efficiently than traditional gas or electric heaters.**

Finally, most geothermal manufacturers offer hot water equipment that can provide hot water to the home. These systems can heat water at three to five times the efficiency of traditional gas or electric heaters, and unlike solar solutions, provide hot water 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

Many geothermal units are eligible for a 30 percent federal tax credit and may qualify for utility and state rebates. Meanwhile, states are beginning to acknowledge that geothermal systems offer as much benefit through energy conservation as wind and solar provide through clean generation. The state of Maryland, for example, recently enacted legislation making it the first state in the nation to allow utilities to claim renewable energy credits for the installation of geothermal heat pumps.

To find a geothermal system that fits your needs, visit [www.waterfurnace.com](http://www.waterfurnace.com) or talk to a WaterFurnace expert at (800) GEO-SAVE.