



Wisconsin Geothermal Association

Fall 2015

President's Message

While tempted to dive in and tell you about all of the things we *will* be doing, I'd like to take a second to "close the loop" on something that we worked on earlier in the year.

In the spring of this year, a group of more than 20 of us spent an afternoon in Madison talking with our legislators about several issues. Most important to us was the question of the definition of "renewable" in the state's rules and statutes.

It's easy to be jaded about advocacy, so some of you may be surprised to learn about the results of our efforts.

Following our meetings, we received calls from the Legislative Reference Bureau and the Public Service Commission, both at the request of legislators with whom we'd talked. Each wanted to know more about our specific concerns and each confirmed that the renewable language, while ambiguous, was being interpreted in a way that was favorable to our interests.

Specifically, we wanted to know that "renewable" included geothermal heat pumps even if the statutory language seems to suggest that renewable technologies were only those that produced electrical energy. Geothermal heating and cooling, as you know, operates on the demand side of the energy equation, not the supply side, and operates on the thermal side, not the electrical side.

Notwithstanding, we were told that the statutes as interpreted today are favorable to our industry. That's good news. It means we don't have to change the laws to get what we want. But it also begs a question: If we already have what we want, why is geothermal struggling relative to other renewable technologies?

We were told that a big part of the problem is that many of the utilities have already met their renewable portfolio standard goals. What that means is that the utilities are either generating or purchasing renewable energy in sufficient quantities that they don't need to invest in other



technologies. Even if they had that need, electricity from wind farms is much less expensive than other technologies, including geothermal.

So it seems we have a market issue. It also seems that the large, investor-owned utilities are not likely to change their means for meeting their renewable goals. But I think we already knew that....

In the end, we have a terrific technology. Our market is growing, though slowly. We have work to do to learn to sell our products. We have a need to ensure that our industry meets or exceeds customer expectations through superior design and installation. We have a need to have our work recognized for the value it creates for property owners through lower and more predictable energy costs. And we have a green factor to our work that is in favor with many of our potential customers.

So we're encouraged by our work in Madison. It turns out we don't have to fight for anything there because we already have it. That leaves us with the time and resources to focus on other things - improving our quality, telling our story, and growing the pie. And that's exactly what we're going to do!

WGA Sets Dates For 2016 Annual Conference

The WGA Annual Conference will return to the Holiday Inn Hotel & Conference in Stevens Point, February 24-25, 2016.



Already, we are working on our keynote speakers and we will be announcing soon the first of two top-tier commentators on our industry.

The conference will begin with lunch on Wednesday, February 24 and end just after lunch on Thursday, February 25. A vendor showcase will be an important part of our conference and sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities will be announced soon.

If you are interested in speaking at the Conference, the WGA recently posted a Request For Presentations on its website at www.wisgeo.org.

WGA has a block of rooms reserved at a special rate and they are already available by contacting the Holiday Inn at 715/344-0200. Be sure to mention you are part of the Wisconsin Geothermal Association (WGA) group to receive our rate.

GEO Ride - June 6

The Annual GEO Ride was held on Friday, June 5 and riders tell us that the weather cooperated and that the route showcased all of the beauty Wisconsin has to offer, including a visit to Wazee Park and Wisconsin's deepest inland lake.

The ride started at Al Muth Harley-Davidson in Black River Falls and featured several stops, including lunch at Becker's 400 Club in Millston.

The ride will be back again next year in its traditional spot on the first Friday of the month of June - June 3, 2016.



Thanks to all who rode and to Steve Meyer for planning the trip!



Questions of Interest

The Wisconsin DNR approves products used in the construction of vertical geothermal boreholes, including the heat transfer fluids used in the loops. DNR does not currently regulate horizontal loop systems, but the use of one of the approved heat transfer fluids is highly recommended because the products have been reviewed for performance and toxicity. Using an approved product in any situation, whether required or not, would provide a measure of protection not only to the ground and groundwater, but to the owner of the geothermal system and the installing contractor as it would reduce/eliminate any chance for potential contamination.

For more information, see: <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/wells/documents/drillabandonproducts.pdf>.



Master Geothermal Installer - Almost Here!

At the Annual Conference, WGA introduced its plans to create a Master Geothermal Installer designation for those installing systems and loop fields. The designation as a "master installer" will require an individual to demonstrate experience, training, and industry involvement. In addition, individuals must pass an examination.

Following a lengthy discussion, the planning committee has made several revisions to the qualifications for the program and we are almost ready to introduce the program to the industry. So what can you expect?

This Fall, we will make available a form that you can complete to see whether or not you qualify to take the required examination. Once we receive the form and a modest application fee, we will evaluate whether or not you meet the established criteria (based on an accumulation of points awarded for experience, education, and engagement - articles, presentations, memberships, other certifications, etc.)

If you qualify, you can take the examination at our Annual Conference in February 2016. If you pass the examination, you will have earned the designation as a Master Geothermal Loop Field Installer or System Installer. You will be provided with logos you can use and we will send a press release as well as update your status on our website to indicate the designation you hold.

Recertification is required every three years and can be met through attendance at continuing education programs and through other activities that promote and support the geothermal industry. Applications and testing windows will be available outside of the Annual Conference, but no dates have been set at this point.

Make this a goal for you and your company!



Test Drive the All New GEO Website! *A Valuable Asset for Geo Consumers AND Professionals Alike*

GEO's website is a robust Internet portal to the world of geothermal heating and cooling. The site has been completely redesigned, with easier and more intuitive access to content which offers basic information about geothermal technologies to potential consumers, plus valuable technical and policy information to industry professionals and decision makers.

With regular industry news features and links throughout the industry, the GEO website is finely tuned to draw maximum traffic from Internet users. At current rates, the combined effect of GEO website functions draws an outstanding million+ hits per year by over 300,000 unique visitors.

A popular feature of the site is our Find-a-Pro Directory, which drives thousands of potential customer inquiries across the United States to GEO Member Companies. Just one Find-a-Pro lead that generates a geothermal heat pump sale easily pays back annual dues for most GEO Members.

The GEO website also provides important updates about current GEO advocacy to promote the industry, including legislation under consideration by Congress and our interaction with state geothermal associations to help them institute laws and regulations that will bolster the industry.

In addition, the GeoExchange® Forum provides a convenient way for potential customers to interact with geothermal heat pump experts and find answers to their questions. The Forum regularly features topics such as determining what type of system will best meet consumer heating and cooling needs; operating assistance; and environmental benefits of geothermal heat pump systems. (GEO)

To explore the new site, go to: www.GeoExchange.org



GEO Continues Its Good Work

Are you a LinkedIn user? If so, are you connected to the GEO Exchange organization? You can join the online group and link to other professionals who are commenting on everything from

legislative and regulatory changes, to media reports, to technical innovations.

You can also find industry information, including an informative newsletter when you visit the GeoExchange online at www.geoexchange.org.

On a national level, GeoExchange is providing a voice for the industry in discussions with federal legislators as they grapple with the the extension of tax credits of geothermal systems and other incentives for consumers and businesses looking to make energy improvements to their new and existing buildings. You can find out more about their efforts and ways you can support GeoExchange at www.geoexchange.org.

Heat Exchange Drilling Licenses Now Required

As of April 1, 2015 the drilling of vertical heat exchange drill holes requires a heat exchange driller license issued by the State of Wisconsin through the Department of Natural Resources. Installers are advised to check that their drillers have the required license. Licenses are not required for all loop field installers, only vertical drill holes extend more than 25 feet below the surface.

License examinations were given over the first several months of this year and currently there are more than 40 licensed drillers in the State. Additional licenses will be granted in the coming months as more drillers demonstrate their qualifications for taking the required examination.

In order to address additional issue that may arise, the DNR has asked to include a geothermal driller on its NR 812 Advisory Code Council. Bruce Walker has been appointed to that Council as a representative of the WGA.

For licensed geothermal drillers, renewal will be contingent on acquiring required (6 hours) continuing education between January 1, 2016 and December 31, 2016. We know that both the WGA and the Wisconsin Water Well Association plan to offer approved continuing education programs at their conferences and continuing education programs throughout the year.

National Geothermal Day Is October

National Geothermal Day aims to raise awareness about environmental and economic benefits of geothermal energy and its vital role in building a clean and secure energy future. Industry partners, communities, businesses and educators have been invited to join efforts to advance the understanding and acceptance of geothermal technology as an unlimited, renewable form of energy.

Find out more about their initiative by visiting the newly-created website for the campaign at www.geothermalday.com.



WGA Continues Outreach Efforts

Outreach has always been an important part of what we do at the WGA. We're constantly looking for ways to reach an audience of potential geothermal users. So what have we been up to?

- We exhibited at the Sustainability Fair at Oshkosh Truck in Oshkosh.
- We signed our Partnership Agreement with SeventhWave (formerly the Energy Center of Wisconsin) and we'll have a presenter at the Better Buildings Better Business Conference early next year as well as an exhibit table.
- We will be presenting to the Wisconsin Assessors Association in October, explaining the value of geothermal installations.
- We signed partnership agreement to participate in the National Geothermal Day.
- We crafted and sent a press release - available for adaptation by our members - encouraging property owners to purchase their geothermal systems now or early in 2016 as we anticipate an increase in volume as the expiration of Federal tax credits looms.
- We are finalizing a partnership agreement with the Midwest Renewable Energy Partnership that will have us swapping memberships and booths at our Annual Conference and looking for new ways to increase the presence of geothermal in the array of renewable energy options promoted by the MREA.
- We continue to field questions from consumers about geothermal projects.
- Our website is a starting point for consumers looking to learn more about geothermal heating and cooling and to find a qualified contractor in their area.
- And the list goes on and on....

Biggest Golf Outing Yet!

The WGA held its third annual Golf Outing at the Castle Course at Northern Bay Resort (Arkdale) on Tuesday, July 28. This was our largest golf event so far, with more than 40 players. The Castle Course lived up to its expectation as being both fun for beginnings and challenging for experienced golfers.



Flag event winners included: Joe Skidmore (Closest to Pin), Doug Zettle (Longest Putt), Amy Clark (Longest Drive), Dan Kuepper (Closest to Pin), Ross Carpenter (Longest Putt), and Brad Schneider (Longest Drive). With a score of 66 (-6), the team of Dave Bernards, Tim Hastert, Rob

Janssen, and Troy Rebeck too home the honors, with two teams trailing by just a single stroke.

Thank you to our event sponsors:

Enertech
Honeywell
Hot Water Products/Boiler Buddy
WaterFurnace

Stay tuned for information about our 2016 golf outing!

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