

GEO COMES OF AGE

THE GEOTHERMAL EXCHANGE ORGANIZATION IS THE VOICE OF THE U.S. GEOTHERMAL HEATING AND COOLING INDUSTRY

Ted J. Clutter, Geothermal Exchange Organization

There's a kid with a fresh face on the block in Washington, DC—a non-profit trade association plying the halls of government seeking recognition for the renewable energy, efficiency and environmental benefits its members have to offer. GEO - the Geothermal Exchange Organization - is the reincarnation of the former Geothermal Heat Pump Consortium, a government/industry partnership that was primarily aimed at utility support for demand-side energy conservation programs during the 1990s.

“With recent political upheavals in Washington, DC—and the growth of geothermal heat pump installations in the United States to approximately 100,000 units per year,” says ClimateMaster, Inc. President and GEO Chairman Dan Ellis, “major equipment manufacturers, distributors and utilities saw the need to refocus Consortium activities toward industry advocacy.”



*Dan Ellis, ClimateMaster, Inc.
President and GEO Chairman*

“The current economic and political environment will have significant impacts on the geothermal heat pump industry for the foreseeable future,” says WaterFurnace International President Tom Huntington, “We must aggressively educate our elected and professional officials about the benefits of geothermal heat pumps as they consider renewable energy legislation and regulatory policies.”

Geo-Enterprises President and CEO Phil Schoen agrees: “By working together, we can secure new opportunities to help grow our industry.” Indeed, a major GEO accomplishment was a 30% federal tax credit for residential geothermal heat pump installations, and a 10% break for commercial uses in the latest federal energy bill. Both credits will remain in force until 2016, and have helped the industry to survive and even thrive during the recession.

“GEO’s government affairs and outreach strategies are more important than ever to knocking down barriers to growth of the geothermal heat pump industry,” says EnerTech Manufacturing President Steve Smith. GEO works in four primary areas of outreach to elected officials, government agencies and the public:

ADVOCACY

GEO’s legislative and regulatory goals include:

- Qualification of geothermal heat pumps in pending renewable energy and climate legislation.
- Development of model geothermal heat pump policy, legislation and regulations.
- Support of government agencies and initiatives for geothermal heat pump research.
- Accelerated installation of geothermal heat pump systems in government buildings.
- Coordination of grassroots advocacy for the geothermal heat pump industry by GEO Members.

PARTNERSHIPS

GEO actively seeks strategic alliances with allied organizations, institutions and agencies to pursue benefits for the industry, especially:

- Development of joint positions regarding federal and state legislation and regulations.
- Collaboration with electric utilities to promote geothermal heat pump installation programs.
- Work with the U.S. Department of Energy on design and installation standards, and methods for monitoring geothermal heat pump efficiency.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

GEO’s public education efforts include GeoExchange® branding and a public awareness campaign, including:

- Education of regulatory officials and legislators about the unique renewable energy advantages of geothermal heating and cooling, and the need for continued installation tax credits.
- Organization of and participation in legislative renewable energy education events at the federal and state levels.
- Encouragement of news media coverage about geothermal heat pumps and industry issues by publications, radio and television.
- Presentations about geothermal heat pumps at venues beyond the industry, including conferences, trade shows, workshops and business meetings.
- GEO’s toll-free information consumer hotline, information-packed website, and our unique online GeoExchange Directory.

QUALITY STANDARDS

GEO actively works with the International Ground Source Heat Pump Association and other allied organizations to promote codes and standards for geothermal heat pump installation training, certification and accreditation.

Current issues of importance to GEO include potential climate legislation and a nationwide Renewable Energy Standard. "We want to make sure that geothermal heat pumps are recognized for the peak power use they can save by renewable heat exchange with the earth," says Gulf Power (Southern Co.) Marketing Manager Keith Swilley. GEO is also actively seeking government and university partnerships for geothermal heat pump efficiency and standards research and development.

GEO offers its members the opportunity to assist the association's efforts with a Grassroots Legislative Action Team, and annual training on the most effective ways to educate elected and appointed officials. A bimonthly e-mail newsletter keeps members informed about legislative issues and industry news, and periodic Action Alerts help members educate their local political representatives.

Members also receive GEO Outlook magazine, produced by the International Ground Source Heat Pump Association; listing in the association's online GeoExchange® Directory; exclusive use of the GeoExchange® trademark and logo; and access to the online GeoExchange® Forum - a popular platform for discussions about geothermal heat pumps systems and installation.

GEO membership is open to all companies, businesses, commercial and non-profit organizations entities involved in the geothermal heat pump industry. More information can be found online at: www.GeoExchange.org. Or call GEO at: (888) 255-4436.



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