

THE MAGAZINE FOR CAPTAINS OF INDUSTRY
ENERGY LEADERS
TODAY

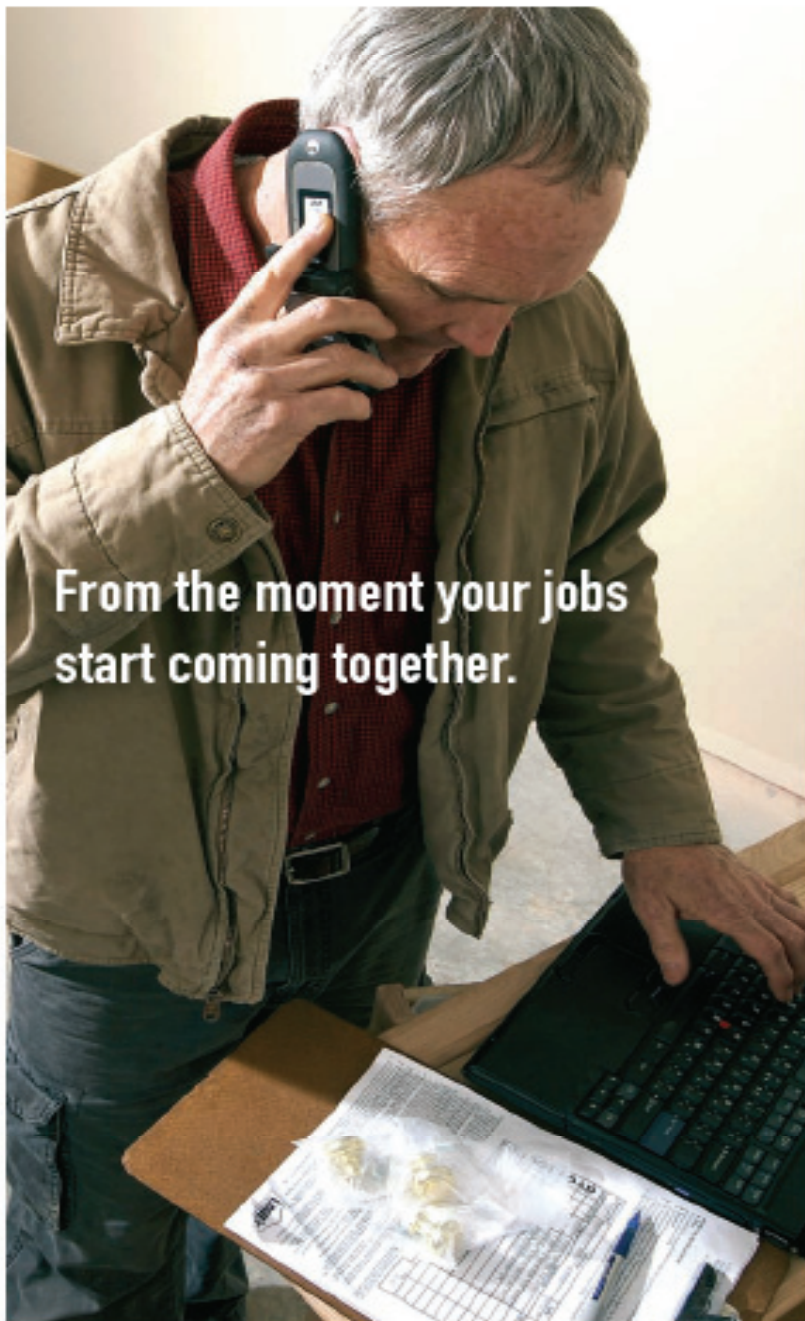
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Air-ease Geothermal

With a focus on diversified heating and cooling, Air-ease proves that going green not only can be beneficial for your return but extremely easy to set up.

p4



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Economic & Ecological Savings

The geothermal systems installed by Air-ease Geothermal Heating, Cooling, & Refrigeration lead to drastic cutbacks on both utility bills and environmental costs

by Jane Caffrey





Clean, efficient, and affordable. These are the three rousing reasons that more and more home and business owners are utilizing geothermal heating and cooling systems in their houses and buildings. Geothermal systems are clean, without relying on gas or fuel; they are efficient, producing 4 units of energy for every 1 unit used; and they are affordable, with homeowners seeing annual savings of 50 to 60 percent on utility bills.

Both the economic and ecological savings associated with such systems, therefore, are increasingly significant during a period of national economic struggle and global environmental concern. Yet Air-ease Geothermal Heating, Cooling, and Refrigeration, an Illinois-based company, has been aware of the benefits of geothermal systems for decades.

“Air-ease installed our first geothermal system twenty-four years ago, long before the word ‘green’ meant energy savings,” Robert Feliszak, owner of Air-ease, said. “Our goal today is to educate our customers on a new way of thinking when it comes to heating and cooling. There is so much energy underneath our feet, no matter where we are, no matter if it’s sunny or snowing. Geothermal is the most consistent of the renewable energies.”

Air-ease, a family-owned business headquartered in Tinley

Park, is the realization of Feliszak’s dream. Feliszak served in the army from 1971 to 1973, before studying heating, air conditioning, and refrigeration at the Community College of Florida. Upon graduation, he began working on yacht air conditioning in Ft. Lauderdale. In 1979, Feliszak’s roots drew him back to Chicago, where he founded Air-ease with his wife and father.

The company began with the fabrication of custom sheet metals and by servicing residential furnaces, boilers, and air conditioners, and quickly grew to become a recognized name in the industry. Later becoming involved in commercial heating and air-conditioning, Air-ease worked on hotels, restaurants, and municipal facilities.

Ultimately, the business began working with the energy saving geothermal systems that are its specialty today, installing its first system in 1986.

“I became aware of the need to ‘look outside the box’ and began learning and searching for more efficient ways to provide heating and cooling,” Feliszak said. “The geothermal side of Air-ease has doubled in recent years. We consider ourselves leaders in the geographic area of Chicago.”

After gaining a solid reputation in Illinois and outgrowing its





offices two times as the client base expanded, Air-ease relocated to a steel structure that the company itself built in Tinley Park. Today, Feliszak, his wife, two sons and staff serve a 70-mile radius around Chicago, specializing in the most efficient HVAC products available, particularly, geothermal heating and cooling systems. Geothermal systems, contrary to ordinary furnaces or air conditioning systems, collect the Earth's natural heat through a series of loops installed below the surface of the ground or submersed in a pond or lake. The loop is connected inside the structure to the geothermal unit that houses the heat exchanger, compressor and fan. In the winter, water and anti-freeze circulates through the earth loop, absorbs heat from the warmer earth and carries it to the geothermal unit where

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it is extracted, compressed to a higher temperature, and distributed throughout the structure. In the summer, the unit removes heat from the structure and transfers it to the fluid circulating in the

earth loop, where it is dispersed into the cooler ground. Since the subsoil temperature of the earth remains constant and moderate throughout the year, every structure is surrounded by its own source of free energy. Air-ease provides vertical loop, horizontal loop, and pond loop geothermal systems, using Louisiana-based AWEB Supply as its primary pond loop vendor. These geothermal systems outperform fossil fuel systems with a co-efficient of performance (COP) of 4.0 (400 percent) versus .95 (95 percent) while producing zero emissions. This energy source is free, renewable, clean and environmentally-friendly. "For the past 31 years we have been leaders in whatever we've done since we understood the benefits of sustainability; in particular geothermal source heat pumps," Feliszak said. "As worldwide energy consumption continues to grow, a significant part of our strategy must include a means to conserve energy and provide greater efficiencies in



We strive for 100 percent customer satisfaction both optimized performance



the HVAC industry. A geothermal system is an investment toward an eco-friendly and efficient way to produce energy without the use of fossil fuel.”

Beyond environmental sustainability, Feliszak also points to several economic benefits of geothermal systems. Although such systems can be costly to install, a geothermal system ultimately saves money by reducing energy costs by up to 60 percent. Homeowners who install geothermal systems from now through 2016 may be eligible for a 30 percent tax credit as provided by the Federal Tax Credits for Energy Efficiency.

Similarly, a tax deduction of up to \$1.80 per square foot is available to owners or designers of new or existing commercial buildings that save at least 50 percent of the heating and cooling energy of a building that meets ASHRAE Standard 90.1-2001. The geothermal systems require little maintenance, keeping service costs down, and Air-ease furthermore offers a Preventative Maintenance Agreement that is customized to individual needs of the owner.

“When faced with the purchase of a new heating, cooling or water heating system, there are two choices: either burn money with an ordinary system or save it with geothermal heating,” Feliszak said.

Beyond offering efficient and cost-effective geothermal systems, Air-ease is also a diversified heating, cooling, and refrigeration contractor, with a custom sheet metal facility. Additionally, the company can design and custom-build steel structures, maximizing the inherent strength of the material to meet the clients needs. Other services available through Air-ease are indoor dehumidification for aquatic rooms and commercial refrigeration.

Technology and qualified professionals both play crucial roles in the success of Air-ease. A staff of factory trained, IGSHPA certified technicians design and install all systems, utilizing state of the art equipment which service technicians keep operating properly.

“Technology continues to change

customer satisfaction in terms of performance and installation appearance.

Robert Feliszak | Owner of Air-ease



and Air-ease keeps up to date with these changes,” Feliszak said. “My staff participates in continued education within our industry and attends training on the latest technology advancements in energy efficiency and ways to perfect our skills. My staff thrives since they have the ability to learn new skills and know that each day can bring a new challenge.”

Those challenges for professionals at Air-ease consist of wide array of both residential and commercial projects. One major project that the company is currently undertaking is a 20,000 square foot custom home in Homer Glen, Illinois. When completed, the home will utilize an IntelliZone comfort zoning system that enables the homeowner to precisely control temperature levels in every room.

The optional desuperheater function will provide free hot water heating to the home as well, further helping the homeowner save on their energy costs. The systems will require little or no maintenance beyond period checks and filter changes.

Although the Homer Glen home is clearly a milestone project, Feliszak maintains that all the company’s projects are successes.

“We strive for 100 percent customer satisfaction in terms of both optimized performance and installation appearance,” he said. “Our greatest success has been diversification and realizing that you must change to grow.”

In upcoming years, Air-ease Geothermal Heating, Cooling, & Refrigeration plans to remain a leader on the front of geothermal

heating and cooling systems. The field will be increasingly lucrative and beneficial in the future; a recent MTI report shows that a mere 2 percent of the heat below the continental United States is more than 2,500 times the country’s total annual energy use.

“It’s very important that we look at our environment in a new way that’s different from the past and present,” Feliszak said. “We need to reduce our carbon footprint. We need to conserve energy and reduce our dependency on foreign energy sources. Otherwise, what will be left for the next generation?”

Air-ease will remain the forerunner in drawing on this renewable resource, fostering tremendous cost benefits for clients and the environment alike. *ELT*

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