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GEOTHERMAL PROGRAM CLOSES A STRONG SECOND YEAR

The group buy program, [Geothermal Urbana-Champaign](#), has secured 14 contracts totaling 61 tons of capacity, nearly identical to the inaugural year of the program in 2021. The program, led by the City of Urbana and the Geothermal Alliance of Illinois, combines bulk pricing on a declining block schedule with public education about how geothermal works. “We explain what geothermal heating and cooling is and train residents to be savvy purchasers of a geothermal system” said Scott Tess, Sustainability & Resilience Officer for the City of Urbana.

The heating and cooling needs of a typical single family residence is served by a 4 to 7 ton geothermal system.

“Geothermal heat pumps are by far the most efficient indoor heating and cooling systems available today. They’re so efficient because they use no fuel, but rather use the earth’s natural and consistent temperatures,” said John Freitag, executive director of the Geothermal Alliance of Illinois (GAOI). Kent Machina, who lives in Corn Belt Energy Cooperative territory says “I have enjoyed significantly lower heating and cooling costs after installing a geo system in my home over 12 years ago. It’s an investment that pays off in the long run, not only in dollars, but also in lowering emissions of greenhouse gasses.”

“We’ve been doing a lot of work to decarbonize the electric side of the power bill, but almost everyone in Central Illinois has a little fossil fuel power plant in their home or business in the form of a gas furnace. We need to start transitioning that portion to clean, renewable sources like geothermal.” said Scott Tess, Sustainability & Resilience Officer for the City of Urbana.

Geothermal systems are offered at a lower than market rate through the program, and the more people who participate, the lower the prices go for all participants. Information on next year’s round of geothermal bulk purchase and newsletter sign-up is available at GeothermalUC.org.

