

Detroit Edison displays new energy-efficient system

Visitors to Detroit Edison's new exhibit at the International Builders Home, Flower and Furniture Show will see a heating and cooling system that's the most energy efficient and environmentally friendly on the market today, making traditional systems obsolete.

The computerized display of a geothermal system, which is four times more efficient than the highest-efficiency natural gas system, is a major attraction at the show. All visitors intending to build new homes can enter a Detroit Edison drawing to win a free, fully installed geothermal system. The utility

will select the winner March 27.

Geothermal systems save homeowners up to 30 percent in operating costs compared with natural gas, and up to 60 percent compared with propane or oil, said William Steele, builder/developer liaison for Detroit Edison.

"These efficiencies add up quickly and multiply into substantial savings for homeowners," Steele said.

The system's operation is simple. In the winter, it collects the natural heat stored in the earth and transfers it indoors, via ground water or piping referred to as "the loop" buried in the ground. In the summer, the system ex-

tracts heat from the air inside the home and transfers it, through the ground water or loop, back into the earth. Geothermal systems also can supply a portion of hot water.

"A geothermal system also helps protect the environment because it uses the earth's natural resources as a renewable source of energy, eliminating the need to burn fossil fuels in homes," Steele said.

The geothermal display at the Builders Show includes a colorful working model and touch-screen computers to

help explain the technology.

"Detroit Edison is demonstrating geothermal heating and cooling systems because customers have asked for alternatives that help them lower their energy bills — and safeguard the environment — without sacrificing comfort and convenience," Steele said.

The 5,000-square-foot exhibit also features the latest technologies in security lighting and landscaping, as well as safety displays and information about Detroit Edison's other services for residential customers.

What's up in building houses?

New home buyers in the '90s are finding the widest variety of styles and options from which to choose. While those choices may bewilder some, a quick look at current trends in residential construction should help the buyer make a decision.

Many of the trends in new homes relate to recent advances in technology. Built-in appliances, including microwaves and hot water dispensers, are the rule rather than the exception in the '90s. Phone jacks in every room, built-in entertainment centers and even built-in whirlpool baths are among the things buyers are looking

for in their homes. Many buyers consider these amenities virtual necessities.

Other popular items fit into the category of luxuries. Master bedroom galleries, spacious bathrooms with dual vanities, high ceilings and home fitness centers are among the "extras" buyers are looking for that tailor the home to a particular personality.

High-gloss cabinets, a wide array of built-in storage spaces, plentiful shelving in closets and even pop-out ironing boards are all features that today's buyer will find attractive and useful while adding to the "finished" appearance of the home.

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