

MAYOR'S COLUMN

All of us in Village government are very mindful of our duty to conduct operations in a most ecologically responsible manner.

To that end, we have committed resources, embarked on new ventures and joined various groups to promote stewardship of our environment and set example for our youngest residents.

Our major initiative was the decision to install a geothermal heating and cooling system in the new Village Hall in lieu of the conventional boiler/furnace system.

Though initially more costly to install, we expect to recoup our investment in just five years in energy cost savings.

The geoexchange or geothermal heat pump system takes advantage of the relatively constant temperature of the earth year round, which is approximately 52° in our area.

By circulating water through pipes in the ground, the system can pull enough heat from the earth to warm a building, even in freezing weather. In summer, the water flow is then reversed, pumping the heat out of the building into the ground. The system necessitated the digging of 19 wells on the Village lawn, done at the start of construction last year.

The geothermal process uses only a quarter to a half of the electricity required for conventional heating and cooling systems resulting in a cost savings from 20 – 70 percent with the largest anticipated savings in heating costs.

The system is not new, having been around for decades primarily in the Scandinavian countries. However, just in the last few years, the technology has improved dramatically. The technological advances connected with the rising costs of electricity, natural gas and heating oil

and the increased concerns about carbon dioxide emissions, making the system both a responsive and economically prudent choice for the Village.

Sarah Lawrence College used the geothermal technology in their new arts center as did Westchester Country Club in a recent renovation.

We also joined the Community Energy Program and the Greenway Project, two conservation initiatives on the State level.

Through membership in Community Energy, we joined a small but growing consortium of municipalities purchasing renewable energy. The Village now purchases 20% of our power as wind power generated in New York State and delivered to our regional electric grid for distribution. It has proven to be reliable, affordable and emissions free.

The Hudson River Valley Greenway is an innovative state agency created to help develop a volunteer regional strategy to preserve scenic, natural and historic resources while balancing compatible economic growth.

By joining, we are eligible for not only free technical assistance, but possible funding for local land use projects.

On a very local level, we have seen our recyclable tonnage increase yearly as well as the recyclable yard waste. We ask residents to be even more vigilant in their disposal of all materials. The Village recently was issued an alert for having too much recyclable cardboard in our general trash, rather than recyclable materials. Also, it is imperative that branches are separated from grass clippings. Comingled lawn waste is for recycling at our area facility.

All Village maintained properties uses well water as the source for our sprinkler systems and all use only biodegradable citrus-based industrial cleaning products on sidewalks and structures. During the upcoming

road repair project, all the materials generated by “milling” the pavement will be recycled and used for road bases elsewhere.

We are also hoping to purchase stronger and more secure bike racks to encourage greater riding especially to the train station, and thanks to the generosity of Village resident, Pam Lippe, we have an electric car in the Village fleet.

The Boy Scouts are also helping us to inventory the Village owned trees so we can monitor their health and begin an organized program of replacement.

And finally, we are adding quite a few more benches around town so you can stop and enjoy our beautiful Village.

Residents working together with Village government can make important contributions both large and small in keeping our community green in many different ways.