

“Green” options for seniors in Hamlin housing project

by Kristina Gabalski

A new senior 55 and older housing subdivision in Hamlin is the first of its kind in the area to offer cutting-edge “green” heating and cooling technology to residents.

Hamlin Meadows, located off Roosevelt Highway, held its grand opening August 15. Developer Jim Beehler of Beehler Construction said residents have the option of using a geothermal heat pumping system rather than a traditional gas furnace and water heater.

Beehler said geothermal is a renewable energy source that saves money. In early July, a test well was drilled at the model home to determine the feasibility of using a geothermal heat pumping system. “We are thrilled to be the first senior housing community offering a ‘green’ solution to its residents and we think they will be pleased with the savings they can realize from geothermal heating and cooling,” he said. The goal, Beehler said, is to, “... stabilize energy costs, which add value to the home. The owner will save money and add value to the resale price of the home.”

Larry Gursslin, a spokesman for the Hamlin Meadows development, said geothermal is becoming more common,



The model home on Hamlin Meadows, off Rt. 18 in Hamlin. The senior housing development will contain about 134 houses when completed.



John Devitt, president of Advanced Thermal Technology, explains the working of a model heat pump that uses water to extract heat from the ground in winter and cold from the ground in the summer. John stated: “This is the most energy-efficient way to heat or cool a house. In this model home we dug a well 350 feet deep and filled it with coils; there’s 600 to 800 feet in this one and it looks like a Slinky toy if you pulled on it. The water in the coils extracts heat or cold, depending on the difference in temperature between ground level and deep down in the earth. The depth you need to set the coil in depends on several factors: level of insulation, size of the house and the location north or south of the equator.”



The ribbon was cut by **Jim Beehler**; participating were Hamlin Supervisor **Denny Roach**, **Jim** and **Jim’s wife, Sue**.

but many people locally see it as mostly an option for commercial properties. “In Toronto,” he explained, “they are



Larry Gursslin stands next to an Aquarius water convection system unit that can handle heating or cooling from a ground source heat pump. This unit is on the model home and is a green energy option on homes in Jim Beehler’s new senior housing development, Hamlin Meadows in Hamlin.

looking at it as more commercial and residential.”

Gursslin said the more builders become educated about geothermal, the more they will begin to install the systems.

Gursslin, who is also the mayor of Hilton, said geothermal systems have been installed recently at Brockport High School and the new Hilton-Parma Fire Hall. It was also a part of new construction at Roberts Wesleyan College in North Chili.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, geothermal is the most efficient heating and cooling system available with heating efficiencies 50-70 percent higher than traditional alternatives and 20-40 percent higher efficiencies than available air conditioners.

“I was just in the model at Hamlin Meadows,” Gursslin said on the very warm and muggy morning he spoke with Westside News Inc. “It was almost colder than needed.” He said geothermal can change from heating to cooling in a matter of minutes.

The model home is built to the Tier 3 Standard of the Energy Star Program, Gursslin said. That is the highest rating available and offers several benefits, he said. The homes will be referred to as “green” homes, or constructed under the most stringent energy standards, which help maintain the value of a home. Tax incentives are also available meaning that buyers can deduct thousands of dollars from their federal tax bill.

Beehler Construction has collaborated with David Preston, President of WorldWide Energy and Communications, to consider the merits of installing geothermal heating and cooling systems in Energy Star Tier 3 homes. “Our customers are going to see an immediate savings in their utility bill and the tax credit will help fund their investment,” Preston said.

Hamlin Meadows is located on Rt. 18 (Roosevelt Highway), just east of the Rt. 19 Hamlin Center light.

The model is open Sundays from 1 to 4 p.m.

Photographs by **Walter Horylev/Westside News Inc.**