



SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A Message from President Doug Schuster

The Geothermal Licensure bill is in trouble. Last year a law was passed giving the Iowa Plumbing Board the authority to issue a license for geothermal installers. Right now the Plumbing Board has effectively stonewalled the implementation of the bill.

We need your help. If you want to see a geothermal license that geothermal installers have input on, we need lots of help. The last legislative meeting that Gary and I attended had 7 lobbyist opposing the license and only the two of us in favor of it. If the Plumbing Board has their way, and they are about to, every person who installs or works on a geothermal system will have to have a HVAC license. And the only way you will get a HVAC license is to go through an apprenticeship. This, by the way, will include loopers.

Part of our problem is that the Board has already allowed everyone with 5 years experience to be grandfathered into a master license of their choosing. Everyone else, regardless of years of experience, is going to have to start as an apprentice. There are a lot of contractors barely capable of properly installing a gas furnace. Now they will also carry a license to screw up.....I mean install a geothermal system.

As it was last left we had modified the bill to read "Residential Geothermal Heat Pump Systems" and it was still shot down based on the merits of training. There are no apprenticeship programs currently available – even if there were I'm not sure the license would fly.

What we need is to have every one of you contact you state elected official and as many other people as you can to have them contact their legislators. Utility members should also give the legislators the utilities point of view since you are some of the first to hear about a geothermal system that does not work. Distributor and equipment representatives should push from your point of view. I can't imagine that geothermal equipment manufactures and distributors would favor unqualified people installing your equipment. Even with your own training programs, there is a lot a dealer is expected to know about codes and the like before the dealer could/should install a geothermal system.

OVER

The following is from our IGA lobbyist, Paula Dierenfeld. **Please help with this because if this gets repealed we may never get it back!**

**ACT NOW TO PROTECT IOWA HOMEOWNERS FROM
UNQUALIFIED INSTALLERS OF GEOTHERMAL HEAT PUMP SYSTEMS**

Legislation was enacted last year to provide for the licensure of geothermal heat pump installers. The goal of the legislation was to protect Iowa consumers from persons who are not qualified to install geothermal heat pump systems.

Residential homeowners spend as much as \$20,000 to \$40,000 to have a geothermal heat pump systems installed. They are often not as sophisticated as commercial purchasers of geothermal systems and are at greater risk of hiring someone that cannot do the job properly. Installer licensing will give homeowners the confidence they need to make good hiring decisions.

Several months have passed since enactment of the installer licensing law, however the Plumbing and Mechanical Systems Licensing Board has yet to establish a licensing program. Concerns have been raised regarding the Board's authority to require installers to be licensed and to have specific training and work experience. Legislation should be passed immediately to address these concerns and to clarify the law.

Iowans should not have to wait any longer to receive the protections they were promised in the installer licensing law that was enacted nearly a year ago!

If you have questions please contact your IGA Board member.

REMINDER:

***THE MIDWEST GEOTHERMAL CONFERENCE IS SCHEDULED MARCH 30
TO APRIL 1, 2010 AT THE GRAND RIVER CENTER IN DUBUQUE.***

***THE SCHEDULE AND ON-LINE REGISTRATION CAN BE FOUND ON THE
ASSOCIATION WEBSITE:***

WWW:IOWAGEOTHERMAL.ORG

Your Association is looking for a few good men or women to serve on the IGA Board of Directors starting in 2010. The requirements aren't stringent, basically a desire to serve your industry by attending a few Board meetings and serving a day at the State Fair Exhibit.

Please consider serving. Contact a Board member if interested.