

# Total Green equals total satisfaction

Paul Auerbach of Total Green not only installs geothermal home energy systems, he *believes* in them as only someone with decades in the marketing field can. It is belief in a product so self-evidently superior, it does not need much proselytizing; it simply sells itself.

On a recent spring day, the White Sulphur Springs native sat in his Monroe home and spoke of an "old" technology with transformative potential. Outside, temperatures were in the mid-40s, with a raw wind making the day feel colder. Inside his 1908 late-Victorian structure, Auerbach enjoyed a pleasant 68° environment – and not a drop of fuel oil or a cubic inch of gas was being burned. When he turned on the hot water tap in his kitchen, it came not from a gas- or electric-fired water tank.

Auerbach, like the Hair Club for Men president in the TV commercials, not only runs

Story and photo by **Frank Rizzo**

Total Green, he's a client as well.

In his mind, we will soon look back on the way we presently heat and cool our homes as costly, wasteful and inefficient. That is, if we turn en masse to a technology that dates back to the invention of the direct exchange (DX) geothermal heat pump by Robert Webber in the late '40s.

It is a system of using copper tubes filled with a refrigerant and buried in the ground, which has a constant year-round temperature. By simple and efficient means, a structure can be cooled in the summer and heated in the winter.

And why, if this technology has been around for decades, and is so much more cost-efficient, is it just catching on now?

Quite simply and paradoxically, it's cost, said Auerbach, who started Total Green several years ago and has installed about 50 systems.

During much of the postwar period, Americans enjoyed low energy prices due to the abundance of cheap



Paul Auerbach of Total Green points out where the outside tubing comes into his basement. It connects with a compressor (below), the heart of the geothermal system. "It takes energy from the ground, and moves it to where it's needed," Auerbach said of the compressor.



oil. When he moved into his home, said Auerbach, fuel oil was about \$1 a gallon. Before installing geothermal, his house used 1,800 gallons oil/year. Do the math.

Then too, installing a geothermal system will run in the tens of thousands.

"That's the only thing that stops [potential clients], the upfront costs," admits Auerbach. "The only people

who don't do it are the ones who can't get that home equity loan..."

Under the current "Stimulus" package, the federal government will grant a 30 percent break on "alternative" energy installations.

Auerbach spoke of a client who was quoted a figure of \$23,000 to install a conventional heating/cooling system. Total Green's estimate was \$45,000 – less the tax break, bringing

the cost down to \$31,500.

"By not buying oil/gas, she makes up the difference in five or six years," Auerbach pointed out. "She decided to go with geothermal."

Before starting Total Green, Auerbach did the research on the "green" technology available. Geothermal promised the quickest return on the installation costs.

He calls himself an "energy manager" who will go into a home and via simple formulas calculate its energy needs.

Total Green's outside work is under a 20-year warranty while the inside one is guaranteed for five years. Everything used is off the shelf, according to Auerbach. The system requires little maintenance and has none of the potential gremlins of conventional heating and cooling systems.

"The greatest satisfaction is when we finish the installation and I can tell the client, 'See that boiler? You can throw it out,'" Auerbach said.

He has, however, kept his old boiler in the basement, a reminder of an anachronistic way of doing things.

"I like to show people the old and the new," Auerbach said.

Contact Auerbach at 845-774-8484 or visit [www.totalgreenus.com](http://www.totalgreenus.com).



The old and the new energy conveyance systems in Paul Auerbach's home. The warm or cool air now comes through the vent in the floor. Auerbach will have the radiator removed once the price of scrap metal comes back up.