



## **SIEC Helps Shawnee Community College Be Green While Saving Green**

Recently, two \$50,000 GeoAlliance grants were presented to Shawnee Community College to help in completing the installation of a geothermal heat pump heating and cooling systems in two of the college's facilities. One grant was presented to the Shawnee Community College Foundation to help in providing highly efficient heating and air conditioning and improved comfort to the Saints Place student housing facility. The other grant is helping to fund the geothermal installation in the Medical Arts and Sciences building. The grant program is funded by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF) and administered by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC). Grants are awarded through electric cooperatives such as Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative.

The purpose of the grant program is to encourage the use of clean and efficient geothermal systems to heat and cool not-for-profit and public facilities that receive electric service from Illinois electric cooperatives. The grants are awarded for one third of the incremental difference between the cost of a traditional fossil heating and cooling system and a geothermal heating and cooling system up to a cap of \$50,000 per installation. The geothermal

systems at Shawnee Community College are expected to collectively save the college approximately \$121,000 per year over comparable fossil fuel heating and cooling technology.

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative assisted the college in obtaining the GeoAlliance grant. Cooperative Director of Member Services Chris Boyd said, “Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative and Shawnee Community College have a long standing relationship of working together for the betterment of the communities we serve. The geothermal systems in the college’s newly constructed facilities will use earth friendly technology for heating and cooling, which will reduce operating costs for years to come and provide improved comfort for the students. In a time of economic distress I am proud that the co-op was able to obtain GeoAlliance grants to fund a portion of these construction projects for both the college and the college foundation.”

Geothermal heat pump systems use the earth’s natural energy and that’s why they are so efficient and so inexpensive to operate. During cooling months, heat and humidity from inside a building is transferred into the earth through tubing in the ground. Then during the heating months the process is reversed. There is no combustion with a geothermal heating system, but a modest amount of electricity is used to operate the circulating pumps, fans, controls, and compressor, which along with the heat exchangers are the major components of the geothermal heat pump.

Shawnee Community College President Dr. Larry Peterson said, “We have a very good relationship with Southern Illinois Electric and are very pleased with the geothermal installations in both locations and appreciate their assistance in obtaining the GeoAlliance grants.”

For more information about the GeoAlliance grant program, call Chris Boyd at the Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative office at 618-827-3555.