

BUILDER INTEL



WHY THIS HOMEBUILDER IS A BIG BELIEVER IN GEOTHERMAL

McKinney Builders is involved in developments emphasizing wellness and tranquility where it only makes sense to specify clean, quiet HVAC systems.

With a name like Serenbe, homebuyers expect a quiet, serene neighborhood unspoiled by noisy HVAC units.

Located in Chattahoochee Hills, Ga., Serenbe is founded on the principles of sustainability, wellness, and mindful living. The heating and cooling systems here play a big role in making Serenbe, well, serene.

Let's start with noise, or lack thereof.

"You don't have to worry about your neighbors' compressors kicking on," says Jim Beveridge, developer with McKinney Builders in Newnan, Ga. "You can hear nature. How beautiful is that?"

The answer, of course, is very beautiful, and that's due in part to geothermal heat pumps. These HVAC systems use underground temperatures, which remain between 65 and 70 degrees year-round, to heat or cool indoor spaces — no noisy compressor unit required.

Geothermal is also the most environmentally friendly heating-and-cooling system, producing fewer greenhouse emissions than conventional units, which is why it's frequently found in developments that prioritize cleaner appliances and technologies.

GROUND ZERO FOR GEOTHERMAL

McKinney Builders was one of the original builders of Serenbe, which was among the first communities in Georgia to specify geothermal heat pumps for all its houses. Back then, "geothermal was more of an experiment," Beveridge says. "It wasn't very prevalent at the time." These days, however, builders have embraced the technology as a cleaner, quieter alternative to conventional HVAC systems.

Other developments are mandating geothermal heat pumps, as well, such as Trilith, a mixed-use community in Fayette, Ga., emphasizing green spaces and sustainability. McKinney Builders built here, too, and as the company became more familiar with geothermal, the more it began specifying this type of heating-and-cooling equipment in its own projects.

CHEAPER HEATING AND COOLING

Take the Gardens at Arbor Springs.

Developed by McKinney Builders, the Gardens at Arbor Springs is a picturesque 55-plus community offering single-family homes and townhouses with a focus on comfort, convenience, and quality craftsmanship in Newnan. The developer recently completed its first phase of construction, which includes 49 homes, with a second phase underway. Here, too, the houses



use geothermal HVAC systems from EnerTech Global. The operational efficiency of these systems means residents are paying substantially less to heat and cool their homes compared to those who have conventional HVAC units. That's appealing for people on a fixed income, Beveridge says.

"A lot of people here are retired or thinking about retirement, so cutting their heating and cooling costs by half for the rest of the home's life is very helpful to them," he says.

There are also attractive tax incentives to consider. Homeowners with geothermal heat pumps are eligible for a tax write-off of up to 30 percent of the total system cost through the federal Investment Tax Credit.

That can help overcome homebuyer concerns about the higher upfront price of these units. (They are more expensive than traditional gas-fired furnaces and air conditioners.) According to Beveridge's calculations, homeowners will see an ROI within five years.

"They are paying a little bit more initially," Beveridge says. "But they'll break even in five years, then enjoy half-priced power."

McKinney Builders is specifying geothermal systems at another of its developments, this one along the shoreline of Georgia's scenic Lake Burton where homes are designed to "tap into the energies of nature," as the developer puts it. That's true in a literal sense when it comes to geothermal heating and cooling.

"We're mandating it again ourselves because the homebuyers who want the highest quality house are delighted when they learn they have geothermal instead of conventional HVAC," Beveridge says.

EnerTech Global is proud to work with builders like McKinney Builders, providing geothermal heating-and-cooling comfort with one of the strongest warranties in the industry.

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