

Modine Conducts Geothermal Training 101

Modine Mfg. Co. recently held its first geothermal training courses as part of Modine University, the company's new training school. The geothermal courses focus on educating representatives, distributors, and contractors about how to perform a complete, successful geoechange installation, from field work to equipment connections.

To enhance the training experience, Modine partnered with nearby Gateway Technical College (GTC) in Kenosha, Wis., whose coursework is under the direction of Tom Niesen, division chair – manufacturing, HVAC/alternative energy. The technical school has a dedicated geothermal program, allowing attendees to receive continuing education unit (CEU) credits, learn about Modine's new geothermal systems — including the Geofinity residential line — and interact with working geothermal systems.

Since the program began this spring, more than 80 professionals have graduated from Modine University's geothermal training course. Two additional courses are scheduled for this year.

"Geothermal is one of the fastest-growing renewable-energy technologies," said Jesse Robbennolt, geothermal product manager, Modine. "So it only makes sense that we offer education right here, where some of the nation's best geo technology comes from."

Robbennolt and others led attendees through the first day of training, which covered topics such as selecting and sizing the right geo solutions; how to sell geo systems; and an overview of the award-winning Orb controller, which is standard on all Geofinity products.

For the next two days, students were transported to GTC, where they enjoyed a wide range of hands-on opportunities, along with presentations by Niesen. At GTC, instruction was heavily focused on creating a complete geo installation by making sure the loop field was installed and designed properly, along with witnessing a working drill rig. Topics included designing the ground heat exchanger, flushing and purging, grouting procedures, pipe joining methods, soil identification, and thermal conductivity.

A significant number of attendees said the experience with Modine was among the very best they've had. "The training was excellent,"



Top: Andrew Shive, Appalachian Sales Group, and Dick Burhans, ReBearth Products, discuss drilling techniques. **Middle:** David Speers, senior controls engineer, Modine, talks to students at Gateway's geothermal lab in Kenosha, Wis. **Above:** Jesse Robbennolt, EIT, Modine (center) instructs Modine University students on how to properly fuse pipes during the loop field installation.


said Bill Price, HVAC designer/sales, First Supply LLC, Eau Claire, Wis., a distributor with 28 locations throughout the North Central U.S.

"Instruction — from products to installation techniques — was informative," added Price. "As an HVAC, hydronic, and geothermal systems designer, it's very good for me to know that the partnership between Modine and Gateway is strong, that training is a priority, and also to keep my finger on the pulse of new technology, such as Modine's Orb controller."

"It was also interesting for me to see the drilling first hand," said Price. "That portion of the training helped me get a better understanding of the geo-exchange process, including how to size the geo field. I could develop a fuller picture of what's involved, and also — where there are job site concerns — how to keep the

site cleaner and better managed."

"I was very impressed," said Dick Burhans, president, ReBearth Products Inc., Truro, Iowa, a wholesale distributor of geothermal construction and drilling supplies. "My time was very well spent, and the courses were very well organized and informative."

Burhans speaks from experience. A trained geologist, he began his career as a driller in Colorado while sharpening his keen interest in all things that make and improve the way mechanical systems work. "As distributors, reps, and installers, it's uplifting for us to know that Modine is deeply invested in geothermal and is at the cutting edge of emerging geothermal technology. We need to know they understand all facets of what's involved — from equipment to all types of geo-exchange." 

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