

**Up-front costs may be expensive;  
Savings make case for investment**

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Amid the economic turmoil of 2009, people going to this year's West Branch Builders Association Home Show are finding an array of booths in which energy efficiency products are featured.

Often, those so-called "green" products may be expensive up front, but the tax incentives and energy savings make the investment worthwhile.

"Up front, it is expensive to put a geothermal system in. However, the energy savings are huge," said Keevin Larson, president of K.C. Larson Inc.

According to Larson, solar and geothermal energy will become more on demand as fuel prices continue to rise.

Over time, the systems not only pay for themselves, but with some systems, cus- (From Page A-1)

tomers receive a payback.

One option is a geothermal energy system that is placed into the ground.

"Right now in the United States, 65 percent of our oil is imported. As the price structure for the different types of energy in the United States goes up, it makes geothermal and all sources of renewable energy more competitive with the fossil fuel pricing," Larson said.

"We are going to be pushing the incentives on the heat pumps and the geothermals that they have come up with. With geothermal systems, a person can receive \$6,000 in incentives on their taxes. I have it in my house," said Richard Umstead of U&U Modular Homes.

Another environmentally friendly option involves a green switch and Nudura, shown at the Hoover Industrial Supply booth.

"We have Nudura, it is an insulated concrete form. It is an energy efficient way to build. Your heating and cooling bills will be less because the product is so efficient," Rick Hoover, owner of Hoover Industrial Supply, said.

Hoover also carries a product called green switch.

"In the morning when leaving the house, you can disable all vampire type power or anything you do not want on by the flick of a switch. It is a huge energy saving," Hoover said.

That may come in handy particularly after 2010, when electric rate caps are due to be lifted and rates are expected to go up dramatically.

UGI also recently informed its customers that rate increases may affect their bills at the end of March.

"The reason for the rate increase is so we can continue to provide competitive, excellent, dependable service. It is also for the maintenance of our systems as well," said Dave Columbine, representative for UGI.

The home show will continue from noon to 5 p.m. today at the recreation center at Lycoming College.