

## **Allegany College of Maryland library will be heated and cooled from beneath surface of Earth**

**Jennifer Raley**

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CUMBERLAND - People who have strolled around the outer track at Allegany College of Maryland recently have probably taken notice of the big dirt pile on the football field.

"We have a lot of people ask about it," ACM Physical Plant Director Don Hedrick said of the drilling taking place to install a geothermal heating and cooling system at the library building.

"Geothermal systems are more energy-efficient," said Mona Clites, dean of administrative services at ACM.

Sixty 300-foot geothermal wells are being drilled, according to Hedrick. Although they are called wells, no water actually comes out of the ground, he said.

Geothermal systems rely on the Earth's temperature for heating and cooling; in the winter, the system transfers heat from the ground into the building, and in the summer, the heat is transferred from the building back into the ground.

"The benefits are extensive, especially with the high cost of fossil fuels - geothermal systems operate at about a quarter of the cost," said Hedrick. "Geothermal is becoming the way to go - it lessens our reliance on foreign oil and it doesn't pollute the air."

Most of the campus buildings are heated by oil or propane.

ACM already has geothermal systems at its Everett and Bedford campuses in Pennsylvania.

"Another advantage is that the geothermal systems control humidity, and that is especially important in a library," said Hedrick.

Last year, the college experienced a minor mold problem in the library, said Hedrick.

"We hired a group from Friends Aware, and they were able to come in and take care of the problem," he said.

The library renovation and addition project is expected to be completed this summer, according to Clites. The 11,000-square-foot addition will provide space for the computer lab, the college's Appalachian Collection and an expansion of the board room, according to Clites. The total cost of the library project is expected to be approximately \$4 million.

The interior track is closed because of the drilling, which is being performed by Wayne's Water 'N Wells of Oakland and Cumberland. Lashley Construction of Frostburg is primary contractor for the library renovation and addition project.

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