



Solar panels on parking roof



Solar panels on van right outside my apartment



Solar panels on business buildings



Green space zoned for more businesses

When I went on my walk around my neighborhood, downtown Bloomington, I saw many solar panels. The solar panels are the most visible form of green energy as they usually sit on building roof tops. My city government has several incentive mechanisms as well as state and federal incentives, so Bloomington currently has a high rate of solar adoption. I took my pictures in a newly renovated technology business park created by the city, called [The Trades District](#). There are solar panels on the buildings as well as solar panels on the covered parking platforms.

A form of green energy that is not visible, but I am sure was present on my walk, was geothermal heating and cooling systems. These are really deep holes cut into the ground that allow buildings to use the relatively cool underground temperature to naturally cool in the summer, and then the relatively warm underground temperature to naturally heat in the winter. These natural heating and cooling methods save a lot of energy in buildings, so they are part of our green energy sources.

I learned about geothermal heating and cooling when I interviewed Bill Brown, the now retired director of Indiana University's Office of Sustainability, for a class project I was working on. The IU Office of sustainability's building, [E-House](#), is virtually a net zero building because of its solar panels on the roof and its geothermal heating and cooling underground. Bill Brown let me know that Indiana is a good state for geothermal heating and cooling because of our underground limestone deposits. When you bore holes 250 feet deep, you have to line them to make sure that they do not fill in with dirt, mud, and other debris. But in Indiana, the limestone rock acts as a natural liner for the holes, so they are very efficient to maintain once drilled.

As new businesses are moving into The Trades District of Bloomington, I would hope that they would consider not only building solar on their roofs, but also to offset their heating and cooling energy with geothermal. Being underground, geothermal is sometimes forgotten, but it is an important part of engineering green energy into buildings.



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Just because geothermal is underground and out of sight, does not mean that it should be out of mind.

Geothermal uses less energy to heat and cool our buildings, so it must be in our green energy solution plans.

PGC Day 25:
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10 SECONDS AGO

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