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IKEA's neighbour to be a geothermal leader

By: **Larry Kusch**Posted: **1:00 AM** | Comments: **0g**

A large new retail complex rising next to the IKEA store in southwest Winnipeg will be heated and cooled by one of the largest geothermal systems in the country.

Much of the geothermal infrastructure for Phase 1 of Fairweather Properties' Seasons of Tuxedo shopping centre west of Kenaston Boulevard has already been installed.

The new development will contain some 50 to 60 stores, financial institutions and restaurants to be built over the next several years. Some 275,000 square feet of retail space are to be built on both sides of Sterling Lyon Parkway.

The geothermal heating and cooling system on the 80-hectare site is being designed and installed by Winnipeg's Geo-Xergy Systems Inc.

"By the time it's all done it will certainly be one of the biggest in Canada," said Ed Lohrenz, one of the company's partners.

The IKEA store that opened this week is also heated and cooled using geothermal technology, but it is not part of Geo-Xergy's system.

Between 1,000 and 1,200 geothermal units are being installed in Manitoba homes and commercial buildings each year. There are about 11,000 systems in place in the province. Some of the higher-profile ones serve The Forks Market and Manitoba Hydro's new headquarters on Portage Avenue.

Eight new schools in Manitoba have also been built with geothermal heating and cooling systems.

The systems tap into the relatively constant temperature of the Earth below the frost line to heat and cool buildings. While such heating systems are more expensive to install, they pay for themselves through energy savings in about eight years.

Innovation, Energy and Mines Minister Dave Chomiak told a news conference at the Seasons of Tuxedo site Friday the project will qualify for the provincial green energy equipment tax credit and a district geothermal tax grant.

Such green developments position Manitoba to be "a fossil-free energy leader in the country," Chomiak said.

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