



This is a printer friendly version of an article from the **The Journal News**.
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

"Green" library providing new lessons in Ossining

By **GREG CLARY**
THE JOURNAL NEWS

(Original Publication: November 11, 2005)

The next time you're in Ossining, take a minute to check out the new \$15.8 million library that's rising on a lot next to the current Croton Avenue location, a few blocks east of Route 9.

It looks like a normal building, three stories of steel framing as of yesterday, with earth dug up all around it and workers crawling all over the girders.

One interesting thing about the 47,000 -square-foot building is how it's going to work once it's finished, about this time next year.

It won't have a boiler, nor will it create the kinds of heating and air-conditioning bills that nearly every other building forces its owners to pony up for every month.

It will be climate-controlled with the help of 55-degree water, pumped as much as 880 feet from below the ground and throughout the building, cooling in the summer and heating in the winter.

Sure, 55 isn't the 68-degrees Fahrenheit setting that most of us will use on our thermostats this year to keep our heating bills down, but all that will be required to warm the new building up is some electricity to heat the water an extra 13 degrees. Considering it could be 10 below outside on some January day, 55 degrees sounds downright balmy.

It's called geothermal energy and those of you thinking of building your own structure anytime soon or looking for a way to cut energy costs ought to think about it.

Joyce Lannert, the president of the library's board of directors, hatched the idea when it became clear that the 1968 edifice currently housing the library needed upgrading. The board looked at renovation, but the opportunity to create something visionary proved too much to resist.

"It just makes sense when you're doing it from the beginning," Lannert said. "We wanted to set a public example."

So, they hired experts in creating a "green" building. We're not talking paint colors here, but a structure that Edward Falcone, the library's director, says has "a lighter footprint on the Earth."

For instance, there will be so many windows that as much as 90 percent of the light needed in the building will come from the sun.

The insulation and overall weather-tightness of the building will keep the heat and cold where they belong regardless of the season.

Materials used in the building process come from within 500 miles of the site, to cut down on transportation costs, of course, but more importantly to require fewer diesel-power vehicle miles for deliveries.

Building the new library at the same location also shows insight because it's still within walking distance of the train station and sits on public bus routes, helping to keep down tailpipe emissions.

There will be computers keeping an eye on everything, even toilets that are running longer than they should.

There will be specially chosen paint and carpeting, to put as few toxic chemicals into the atmosphere as possible.

And the landscaping will be drought - and pest-resistant, as well as native to the area.

All this sounds rather altruistic, though maybe not necessary.

But a heating and cooling system that will pay for itself in five years as oil and natural gas prices go nowhere but up, there's nothing altruistic about that.
