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Geothermal heat systems planned here

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A crew from New England Drilling, based in Concord, arrived Tuesday to begin work on the first two geothermal heating/cooling systems to be installed in Oak Bluffs. The new systems will be installed in the offices of Sullivan O'Connor Architects on New York Avenue and a private residence on Pheasant Lane.

Contractor Steve Ouellette and his New England Drilling crew will arrive on Island with four trucks carrying specialized equipment to drill vertical or diagonal geothermal earth loops, depending on the site terrain. Copper tubing placed in the loops carries refrigerant, which picks up heat at 6 to 10 feet underground where the temperature remains at an average of about 50 degrees year-round.

The tubing connects with a geothermal or ground source heat pump system inside a building, which uses that constant temperature for heating or cooling. Nelson Mechanical Design in Vineyard Haven is coordinating the geothermal project and will be installing the system inside the buildings.

"We welcome visitors who wish to visit these job sites and see Oak Bluffs history in the making," said Brian Nelson, co-owner of Nelson Mechanical Design. For more information, visit the web site www.nmdgreen.com or call 508-696-3120.