

WARM AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY WINTER CAMPING



District heating system for cold winter campsites and district cooling for summer heat in car parks. John Pettersson's invention 'the energy post' could have many application areas where there is a need to convert to more cost effective and less environmentally harmful energy production.

BY PER TROSTEMO

Year-round camping is on the increase and winter tourist resorts in the Nordic countries and the Alps are seeing more and more caravans and RVs. Heat supply to RVs mainly comes from electricity posts and LPG burners, which is not the best choice from an energy and environmental perspective.

The inventor and entrepreneur John Pettersson from Funäsdalen in the Swedish mountains has a solution to the problem. District heating.

"I've tested my RV at -35°C and it worked perfectly!"

JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES John owns the district heating company that supplies most of the mountain village with heat and the idea came to him about a year ago when he considered starting a campsite for winter tourism.

"I was irritated about the having to depend on the large electricity companies. I wanted to avoid the high connection charges and being stuck with fixed costs even during the low season. This became the driving force for me to try a new technique for heating, which makes up such a large part of the energy requirement for winter camping."



John Pettersson.

No sooner said than done. John developed a prototype design that could be connected to the district heating network in Funäsdalen. It worked perfectly!

JOHN'S PATENTED SYSTEM is called 'the energy post' and looks like a normal electricity post for engine heaters. It has an in-built heat exchanger that delivers hot, or cold, water directly to the caravan/RV's climate system. The energy can, as in Funäsdalen, be generated by a central

district heating network, but you can also consider using local energy sources at the campsite driven, for example, by bio fuel or solar cells. The cost of modifying an existing waterborne heating system so that it can be docked with the district heating/cooling comes in at a few thousand Swedish kronor. This can be compared to a halved energy cost – minimum – and the obvious environmental benefits.

"The system works just as well for summer camping when you need to cool your caravan or RV during heat waves," says John Pettersson, who sees a number of application areas for 'the energy post'.

"IT CAN BE USED instead of traditional engine heaters for cars and lorries, I've tested it on my own vehicles and it works perfectly. I can also see the system being interesting as a cooling unit for cars in the burning heat of big shopping centre car parks."

'The energy post' is still at the development stage, but John has high hopes of commercial success. During his innovation work on 'the energy post', he has enjoyed a fruitful collaboration with other companies/organisations in the industry such as Alfa Laval, Gewiss, Caravan Club and Alde. ■