

# Wheatfield officials weigh in on proposed banishment of gas appliances

BY LAWRENCE J. KAZNICA

The controversial riddance of gas appliances by 2025 for newly built homes, as proposed by New York state, has reached Wheatfield Town Hall.

Officials weighed in on Gov. Kathy Hochul's ban on gas appliances during the last month's Town Board meeting.

"All the public comment I've received has been negative. She is shooting from the hip," said Supervisor Don MacSwan, who noted many Wheatfield residents survive on gas.

The state will prohibit the sale of gas heated equipment by 2030 for all residential buildings and by 2035 for larger buildings accord-

ing to preliminary plans devised by New York state officials following the lead of California, which has already started the wheels in motion for reduced fossil fuel emissions.

Costs for residential home owners is still largely unknown. Potentially thousands of dollars for a conversion could cause sticker shock if state plans actually move forward.

"I think it's ridiculous. It's all politics. I don't want to get rid of gas," said Todd Brosius, operator of Bro's Club House, a popular breakfast stop on Niagara Falls Boulevard.

The proposed plan for eliminating gas energy also includes con-

verting oil boilers and propane systems to electric. Cash incentives of \$500 for the change have been discussed at state levels, but nothing is drawn in concrete.

President Joe Biden has not given his full endorsement of the potentially life-changing switch-over to electric-only appliances, according to major media sources including CNN.

Local officials are miffed by the governor's proposal, citing recent weather emergencies as to why the proposal is unrealistic.

"We were without power for 19 hours during the Christmas blizzard. We've seen other communities voice their disapproval. I don't even know how residents

could even afford any type of conversion," said Wheatfield Town Councilman Larry Helwig, who passed a motion Feb. 16 expressing the town's displeasure with the governor's proposed plan.

As reported by nationwide studies, including the Environmental Protection Agency, gas stoves reportedly give off significant levels of nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide, which, if not properly vented, causes dangers to people and the environment in general.

It is estimated 38% to 70% of American households utilize gas energy, depending on geographic regions in which gas is especially preferred in the winter-weather-beaten northeast.

MacSwan said he understands the reality of renewable energy, but wonders, "What would happen during a power outage?"

Other restaurant and market owners in Wheatfield refused to comment for this article, considering the controversial nature of the proposal.

Studies have indicated electric-powered appliances are growing more affordable – on par with gas-fueled equipment. Gas appliances are cheaper to operate, according to national reporting, by an upward of 30% savings.

## Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare uses new surgery technology

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When asked why the couple decided to do their procedures on Valentine's Day, Sam joked, "At our age, that's about as exciting as dates get!"

Since the surgery, the couple's daughter, Lisa, said both her parents' vision has "improved a great deal. My mom had one eye done by a different doctor and wasn't happy with it and didn't want to get the other one done."

Currently, Diane said, her vision is "almost perfect."

Sam, who had the surgery on one eye and plans to do the second one soon, said "the eye that was done has improved dramatically. It has improved all aspects of my life."

Although there are many cataract surgery providers in Western New York, Otto said there are few who offer laser cataract surgery, which is more exact.

"We were the very first in Western New York to offer it. ... We like to be cutting-edge and offer the latest and greatest service to

our patients," she said.

In addition, Otto explained that Fichte, Endl & Elmer Eyecare offers a variety of multifocal lenses that allow patients to see clearly in all ranges, as opposed to some practices that only offer monofocal lenses, which allows patients to see at just one range clearly after surgery.

Overall, she said, "We offer the newest technology in the lens in as well as the newest technology in the procedure to give our patients the best visual outcome.

The more tools we have in our toolbox, the better chance we give patients the best result."

**More on Sam and Diane**

Diane is originally from Niagara Falls and she met and married Sam, a lifelong resident of Lockport, where they ended up raising their four children.

Sam was an attorney in Lockport and was active with urban renewal in the 1960s. In the 1980s, former Gov. Mario Cuomo appointed him bridge commissioner of the Niagara Falls,

New York, and Canadian border bridges.

Diane owned a movie production company called Telesto Production Inc., where she produced films locally for PBS.

"My parents are such a lovely and generous couple, and it is a joy to be around them. I'm fortunate to still have them in my life. I come to town as often as I can and I cherish every moment I have with them," Lisa said.

## Niagara Wheatfield, Wilson students partner with Rotary Club to spread 'Lasagna Love'

BY LISA BIELMEIER

Orleans/Niagara BOCES Public Relations Director



"Lasagna Love's" mission says, "We believe that kindness, however big or small, is the key to strengthening our communities."

That is a vision that Niagara Wheatfield Central School District and Wilson Central School District can get behind as they encourage their students to share that attitude.

Niagara Wheatfield CSD Superintendent Daniel Ljiljanich and Wilson CSD Superintendent Tim Carter are both members of the Niagara County Central Rotary Club (Ljiljanich is president). The object of the Rotary is to encourage and foster the ideal of service as a basis of worthy enterprise.

The Rotarians recently had a guest speaker from "Lasagna Love." The organization was founded in 2020 and connects neighbors, who are struggling, with home-cooked meal delivery from their community. This movement of kindness impacts thousands of volunteers and families each week through the United States.

"Lasagna Love" exists to deliver comfort where we experience it most often – our family table – and to prove that even small displays of kindness can have profound and lasting impact," founder Rhiannon Menn said.

Mr. Ljiljanich and Mr. Carter brought the idea back to their districts and presented it to their Interact Clubs. Niagara County Central Rotary Club sponsors and supports students' community service activities if the clubs come up with a way to support the community around them.

NW Interact adviser Beth Pyskaty said they saw it as a good experience for their students to help the community. "At Niagara Wheatfield, we are a family," she said. "We saw this project as an opportunity to help people in our family have a nice meal with their family. Food is something that brings people together. We hope that our family members that received the meals had time to enjoy conversation with their loved ones over a nice lasagna."

Wilson CSD says its motto is "service above self," and its club is consistently looking for ways to help others.

Wilson Interact adviser Corey McCarthy explained, "One of the ways that we found that we could help is by pairing up with the Pathways Program, headed by Rebecca Meyers, to join the 'Lasagna Love' program. Mrs. Meyers and her students shopped for the supplies, while Karen Aloisio, one of the Interact advisers, made her authentic sauce from scratch."

The Niagara Wheatfield's Interact Club invited the district's Youth Activation Committee (YAC) to assist with the cooking.

"Our students are great team members," Pyskaty said. "They learn to work together and help one another. We had some kids who had never cooked before, and it was wonderful to see students teaching other students new skills. We had a club member that was from BOCES culinary, and she was a wonderful teacher."

"This project builds community. Mr. Azarella and Mrs. Dixon's life skills classes got to meet new friends, and we are looking forward to working with them again at our Valentine's Day Bingo event. The goal of YAC is to build an inclusive community that benefits all students."

Ljiljanich said, "It was awesome seeing students and staff with diverse backgrounds working together to prepare lasagnas for families who could benefit from a meal."

Wilson students LeeAnn Gajewski, Abby Freatman, Emma Dirig, Emma Tower, Ozzy Brewer, Lillie Wilson, Emily Shackelford, Elizabeth Wasik and Sam Dack, under the leadership of Mrs. Aloisio, assembled the lasagnas and prepared them for cooking. The Wilson Food Pantry donated loaves of bread, salad and dessert, and volunteers from the district dropped off the meals to six families.

"This was a meaningful and gratifying experience for the students," McCarthy said. "They all agreed that this was something they would like to do again in the future. The Interact Club and Pathways are currently looking into a future date to once again help others."

Carter added, "The 'Lasagna Love' project was not only a special project for the students of Wilson because they truly care for their community, it was a fit for my personal values, doing whatever we can to help others. This project was a collaboration of a school youth group, life skills program, Rotary, and a community food bank in order to give back to six families in need. It does not get any better than that."

Students spread "Lasagna Love." (Submitted photo)

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