

What is Builders Club like in 2020-21 at Lewiston-Porter Middle School?

BY JESSICA SLYE-BUTZ
Builders Club Secretary

Builders Club has worked extremely hard on many projects this year and each has turned out to be a great success.

One project that was my favorite was World Cancer Day. It's one of my favorites because of how much was put into it and the creativity like wearing the color that represents a certain type of cancer, making posters, and selling ribbons.

We raised \$300 for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. It was the first time we had a fundraiser for St. Jude's.

Another great project was the giving tree. I had brought the idea up to Mrs. Oddy to have kids donate gently used or new hats, gloves and scarves to donate to Kids Escaping Drugs. We collected so many that we were also able to donate items to the Magdalene Project. This was a huge success!

These two projects were my favorites so far not only because we were raising money for wonderful organizations, but because it brought people together and it let us have fun in a time of a pandemic.

The recycle team for the Lewiston-Porter Middle School has been fantastic this year so far! We've had a lot of people volunteer to recycle to help our planet be a cleaner place for humans and animals. Builders Club would like to thank all the people who volunteer



Pictured with pictures for Alzheimer's patients are Mayher Cheema, Skylar Elliott and Kiersten Elliott.

each week and all the students that take the time to use the recycle bins around the school.

Keep up the great work! Recently, Builders Club has had people donate sheets, disinfecting wipes, detergent, paper towels and other items for the SPCA and the Feral Cat Focus. This has been a huge success as well. Builders Club thanks everyone who has donated.

In addition, Builders Club raised \$100 for the SPCA to donate along with another \$100 from Kiwanis Club of Lewiston. There are also many animals waiting to be adopted. But remember to adopt, don't shop!

The current event Builders Club is working on is Alzheimer's Awareness Week, March 15-19.

The idea behind this event is to have posters around the school educating people about what Alzheimer's is and how it affects people. We are selling pots of candy for \$2 each. Students can also paint or color a picture to give to the patients. All the donations go to the Alzheimer's Association in Buffalo.

Builders Club, this year for me, has been the best and most fun experience. I think if you asked the other kids in Builders Club, they would say the same as well. Not only has it been a really fun experience, it has been an educational one, too.

The best quote that I think fits Builders Club is "Working together, we can do great things!"

Windsong Mammography to visit Ransomville



First District Niagara County Legislator Irene Myers, left, and the Ransomville Volunteer Fire Co. would like to remind area residents that the Windsong Mammography mobile unit will be at the Ransomville firehall from 8 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, March 13, to conduct mammograms. Those who would like to make an appointment are asked to call 929-9494.

The Ransomville firehall is located at 2525 Youngstown Lockport Road. (Submitted photo)

Lewiston Town Board opposes proposed change in real property tax law

BY TERRY DUFFY
Editor-in-Chief

At its Monday work session, the Lewiston Town Board approved a resolution in opposition to §575-b, a proposed amendment to New York State Real Property Tax Law §487 that, if approved, would drastically alter how real property is assessed for wind and solar energy systems.

Town Attorney Al Bax apprised the board, "This is in response to the proposal from the state to enact what they're calling §575-b, which is an amendment to the real property tax law. Effectively, it would allow the state to, in effect, control the taxes that can be imposed on properties that are alternative energy sources. So, solar and wind, obviously, if they would do so, it would take our local government power away on local control over that issue."

"And in effect, if they reduce the tax below our local tax rate, (it) would be then depleting our tax base."

As it currently stands, the state law provides for a 15-year real tax exemption on properties that contain wind and solar energy projects. This exemption is not mandatory, however. In fact, §487 allows for local governments to opt out of the exemption, and tax wind or solar energy projects based on a property's assessed value. If a municipality does opt out of §487, it can require a wind or solar project to enter into a payment in lieu of taxes (PILOT) agreement.

As part of the state's 2022 budget preparation/review process, New York is now seeking to include §575-b in the Real Property Tax Law. If passed by both houses,

signed by the governor and enacted into law, it would allow New York "to establish a statewide standardized approach for real property tax assessment for wind and solar energy projects," according to a state memo issued to town supervisors and provided by Town of Cambria Supervisor Wright Ellis.

"The governor has introduced a budget bill this year that will abolish the town's ability to assess real property used for renewable energy projects, including all projects with a nameplate capacity equal to or greater than one megawatt," Ellis wrote. "I'm reaching out to colleagues across the state to do something about it"

According to the memo, "Specifically, the assessed value for wind and solar energy projects will be determined by an income capitalization or discounted cash approach that considers an appraisal model created by the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance, and in consultation with the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. The assessment will also include a solar or wind energy discount rate that is set annually by the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance. ... The proposed change will apply to all solar and wind energy projects with a nameplate equal to or greater than one megawatt."

The memo said the provision would "apply to wind or solar energy projects that can be built anywhere in New York, not just large Article 10 or 94-c projects proposed in upstate or Western New York."

"If this change is adopted, the state appraisal model and the

state-controlled discount rate will almost certainly provide the tax incentives desired by the developers and the state, and make the §487 opt out irrelevant. Developers will no longer need a PILOT to get a discount, the discount will be built into the tax law and controlled by the state."

Bax said, "We already (lost) a lot of interest in solar in this area. It is my opinion, and I think it's the Town Board's opinion that we want to keep that local control with the Town Board."

With that, he presented a resolution that "is in opposition to the addition of § 575-b for the real property tax law in 2022 of the New York state budget."



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