

Lewiston panel lobbies legislators to stem radioactive waste imports

State officials willing to talk, 3A

By RAE TYSON
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LEWISTON — Hoping to derail any government plans for expansion of the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works, the Town Board called on its state and federal legislators Tuesday to submit bills blocking the importation of radioactive waste here.

And the U.S. Department of Energy, still secretive about its long-range plans for the former ordnance site, has scheduled a Dec. 20 meeting in Albany with state officials to discuss the future of its Lewiston property.

A spokesman for the state Energy Research and Development Authority in Albany said the meeting will involve discussions about the ordnance plant and six or seven other sites statewide containing radioactive wastes from World War II military production.

The former ordnance plant on Pletcher Road — now called the Ni-

agara Falls Storage Site — has been used for the storage and disposal of wartime radioactive materials since 1944.

The Town Board called the meeting Tuesday to bolster its efforts to block the conversion of the ordnance property.

A government consulting firm, Bechtel National Inc., has recommended such a conversion, although energy officials say they are still studying a number of options for the Lewiston site.

"We would like to see something at the state and federal level (barring) the use of this site for anything else," Supervisor James Lombardi said before eliciting a promise of support from legislative aides.

"I don't think there is anyone who isn't solidly behind you," said Matt Laughlin, an aide to state Sen. John B. Daly, R-Lewiston.

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The meeting in Town Hall also was attended by aides to Assemblymen Joseph Pillittere, D-Lewiston, and Matthew J. Murphy, D-Lockport, U.S. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, R-N.Y., and Rep. John LaFalce, D-Tonawanda.

U.S. Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan, D-N.Y., did not send a representative nor did state Attorney General Robert Abrams, who was the subject of some criticism as a result.

"He's avoided the issue like the plague," county Legislator Lee Simonson said.

John Spath, manager of the state Energy Research and Development Authority's radioactive waste program, said the

Dec. 20 meeting would be attended by representatives of the state departments of labor, health, environmental conservation and law.

Spath said the New York City Department of Health also would send delegates to the meeting since several of the contaminated wartime sites are in the city.

Aides to LaFalce said energy officials will travel to Lewiston after the Albany meeting for discussions with the congressman's citizens' oversight committee.

Meetings with the Town board and area residents are tentatively scheduled for Dec. 21, the aide said.

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