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DOE to open LOOW talks

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LEWISTON — The Department of Energy won't have anything new to tell local officials and residents about its plans for the former Lake Ontario Ordnance Works, a NO LOOW spokesman and one Town Board member said yesterday.

DOE officials are scheduled to meet today in Albany with state and Lewiston officials concerning the future of the 191-acre Pletcher Road site. Tomorrow, the DOE is slated to meet at 3:30 p.m. with Town Board members, and is expected to face the public at 7:30 p.m. in the Lewiston-Porter Senior High School auditorium, 4061 Creek Road, Youngstown.

The meetings were scheduled when strong public dissent surfaced after a November report in the Niagara Gazette which revealed DOE plans to expand the site into a radioactive waste repository.

The site was used in the early 1940s as part of the Manhattan Project, which led to the development of the first atomic bomb.

Said board member Joan Gipp: "I'm just going to tell them they can save their money and we can save ours because they're just not going to do it — period."

Gipp said the DOE has issued "so many conflicting pieces of correspondence that they still have it (expansion) in mind."

The DOE has said its only plans are to secure the wastes already on site — not to add more.

Steven Nathanson, spokesman for NO LOOW, the citizen's group fighting DOE plans, said he expects no new revelations from the DOE because the department is sending technicians — not high-ranking officials — to Lewiston.

"Obviously the people who would be of greater benefit to the community would be the policy makers," Nathanson said.

Nathanson said he is also upset that the DOE has not publicized the meetings.

"The DOE has had several months to meet with the public and they pick the least convenient time of the year to make their presentation. And they don't even publicize it at that," Nathanson said.