

West Valley \$21 million solar farm to get IDA PILOT

By RICK MILLER, Olean Times Herald

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ELLCOTTVILLE — A \$21 million solar farm that will provide up to 1,500 West Valley area homes and small businesses with electricity discounts was approved by the Cattaraugus County Industrial Development Agency on Tuesday.

West Valley Solar LLC, a project by developer BQ Energy of Poughkeepsie, will cover 20 acres and provide about 10 megawatts of electricity for the grid.

BQ Energy has two operating solar farms in Olean off Buffalo Street behind Dresser Rand. It is currently building a third, Homeridae, on a 23-acre site between Homer Street and Interstate 86.

IDA Executive Director Corey Wiktor said customers who sign up for the ESCO program would see a 10 percent to 15 percent savings show up as a credit on their electric bills.

The land is currently owned by the **New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)** and controlled by the town of Ashford. The land does not generate any tax revenue for the town.

Under the IDA's solar policy, the project would require a \$5,000 payment for each megawatt, or a \$50,000 payment in lieu of taxes (P.I.L.O.T.). This is the amount that would be split between the town of Ashford, West Valley Central School District and Cattaraugus County.

The town is also expected to seek additional host community fees from the developer.

The IDA board also heard from Terry Fuller of Cattaraugus-Allegany BOCES on efforts to match vocational training to area manufacturing needs.

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Fuller works to place student interns in local industry and wide variety of other businesses.

IDA board members discussed ways to work with Fuller on how stipends could be given to companies that work to train interns.

“We want to put some real dollars and cents behind this program,” Wiktor said. “How can we help him and these companies.”

The IDA board welcomed John Stahley, vice president and general manager of U.S. Operations for Siemens. Stahley oversees Dresser-Rand operations in Olean. Stahley replaces Gregory Fitzpatrick.

During the annual election of officers, Thomas Buffamante was re-elected chairman; Joseph Higgins first vice president and Joseph Snyder second vice president.

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