



Woodstock Community Unit School District 200

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WHS students tackle solar energy, pedestrian issues

For their semester final, Woodstock High School Project Lead the Way students presented their big ideas to power Woodstock's wastewater treatment plant with solar energy and to make Woodstock a more walkable city to a panel of government leaders.

State Senator Craig Wilcox, state Rep. Steve Reick, Woodstock City Manager Roscoe Stelford were among the panelists in the Learning Resource Center on Wednesday, Dec. 20, the last day before winter break.

"I am incredibly proud of the students' achievements and the opportunities they've had to collaborate with the community, especially the city of Woodstock," PLTW teacher Jason Huber said. "They're thrilled that these real-world projects not only impact the community but also help students develop transportable skills like problem-solving, collaboration, and professional communication."

Students have been working on their proposals all semester and will continue researching and fine-tuning their engineering, design and development before presenting them to the Woodstock City Council in the spring.

Panelists asked the students several questions they are likely to encounter — some of which they were able to answer and some that will require more research.

The walkability project team is made up of Liam Hanson, Hunter Vassar, Peter Muschong and Lucas Rubio. They focused mainly on accessibility to businesses and recreation areas and noted that Woodstock has a walk score of 29 out of 100.

The team researched the cost of sidewalks, crosswalks and examined other towns with higher walkability. The benefits could include better health for residents, less pollution, and economic benefits due to better access to businesses.

Kierstin Carey, Jamahl Mumford, Natalie Morrow and Ashtin White make up the solar panel team. Of the city's four wastewater treatment plants, they chose the plant at 1965 Tappan Street for their project, which they said is the highest energy consumer.

“This initiative aims to counter the escalating costs of electricity in anticipation of the 2035 Climate and Equitable Jobs Act,” Huber said.

The team said they hope to reduce electricity costs by 90 percent while lowering CO2 emission. During their research, they studied facilities in Montgomery, Mason City, Iowa and Carmel, Indiana.