

Ashford Friends Coalition hopes to lead change

ASHFORD – Over the years, people in the Town of Ashford have expressed their opinions and have been fighting to fix problems caused by the **West Valley Nuclear Plant**. Recently, a group has been formed to help lead the charge in getting the town proper reparations for having to deal with the nuclear plant.

At the Sept. 19 Ashford Town Board meeting, Councilman John Pfeffer brought up the idea to the board about starting the Ashford Friends Coalition. The Ashford Friends Coalition would be made up of leaders from local businesses, churches and organizations that would work together on two main goals, getting the right financial reparations paid to the community for having the nuclear plant in the town and working on getting all the waste in West Valley reclassified as defense waste.

“I see our purpose as just taking on those two very large battles and getting as many people pushing behind the cart with the same effort as possible,” Pfeffer said. “We all need to come together at once and start pushing this argument and not just make it once a year and forget about it, but to continually make it.”

Pfeffer saw towns like Miamisburg, Ohio formulate a similar group and have success working toward one goal. He was able to gauge the Ashford community interest for the initiative and hopes to get the same results in the long run.

“It was a discussion I had with [Miamisburg’s] mayor, who said the only way you are going to succeed at this is if you are in Congress’ face constantly,” Pfeffer said. “I have been sending that agenda to people within the community and I think I finally have them on board.”

Since starting the Ashford Friends Coalition, Pfeffer has been talking with residents and organizations including the West Valley Central School and the West Valley Chamber of Commerce, with a positive reception.

Pfeffer is hoping to have the first meeting of the Ashford Friends Coalition in November.

Anyone is welcome to join, as long as they are willing to commit to the cause, which could be a one or two year process.

“As long as people are willing to commit the time and make the long term commitment ... I will take as many people as I can get,” Pfeffer said.

For more information on the Ashford Friends Coalition or anyone interested in joining, email Pfeffer at townofashfordcouncilmanjp@gmail.com.

Heim, Pfeffer reelected to Ashford Town Board

ASHFORD – Ashford residents casted their votes on Nov. 7, allowing John Pfeffer and William Heim to return to their councilman seats as they were reelected to their positions.

Heim received 390 votes, Pfeffer received 342 votes and will each serve a 4-year term for the Town of Ashford.



Pfeffer has previously served on the board for three terms, along with being a member of the **West Valley Citizens Task force** for 20 years, a fireman and EMT for the West Valley Volunteer Hose Company and has served as president of the fire company for the past four years.

“I’m thrilled to have the chance to continue the agenda we have been working on ... and opening up the Town of Ashford as the gateway to Cattaraugus County, getting business rolling and getting new things

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rolling,” Pfeffer said. “I’m just thrilled that the people put that much faith in me to have me do the job.”

Going into his fourth term, Pfeffer said he would like to continue working on the many projects in the town, including getting broadband internet in the town, clean energy initiatives with the possibility of a solar farm on the **Western New York Nuclear Service Center site** and the formation of the Ashford Friends Coalition. Along with these projects, Pfeffer said he would also like to work on a system of senior transportation to and from the town, and figure out more ways to help community based organizations within the town prosper in light of a declining population.



Heim has previously served on the Ashford town Board for four years, while also being a longtime business owner within the town and Ashford resident for 40 years.

With his reelection, Heim would like to continue with the ongoing projects with the town board and focus on two main goals for the town – to bring in more businesses to Ashford and to find a way to lower taxes for residents.