



Long Islands pols keep tabs on research funding

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Now that they've secured \$35million for an Advanced Energy Research and Technology Center to be built at Stony Brook University, don't expect the Long Island Senate delegation responsible for the funding to let scientists go off on nebulous projects without deadlines.

At the ground-breaking last week, State Sen. Kenneth LaValle (R-Port Jefferson) spoke of putting the center on a 10-point program with tangible goals and the need to "put everyone's feet to the fire" to come up with nation-leading energy technology. The goal, he said, was to "put Long Island on the map and create jobs."

LaValle said in an interview that he also wants other disciplines at the school involved, including management and finance, to devise ways that ease the impact of technology's displacement of workers in existing fields.

State Sen. John Flanagan (R-East Northport) said the center is a testament to the notion that "government is supposed to help facilitate activities like this, not undermine them."

Is he at all concerned that the national energy crisis is now, and that research often involves long lead times? "I don't know that they need long windows of time," he said, sounding as though he expects to fill his tank with cheap, clean-burning nano-fuel developed at Stony Brook sooner rather than later.

State Sen. Owen Johnson (R-West Babylon) said he liked the idea that the center was "centralizing our thinking" in a way that would result in a "lot more intellectual energy dedicated to this" critical research.

University officials clearly were grateful for the funding. But some were said to be surprised to read in Newsday that former LIPA chairman Richard Kessel had been informally approached to gauge his interest in heading up the facility. Not to worry. Insiders say the center is likely to choose an academic, not a political heavyweight, as its

leader.

Besides, Kessel, who is taking time off before he decides on a future career, is expected to give as much thought to a political career as one in academia.

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