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With gas fee help, senior living gets a boost in the city

With a somewhat aging population and a competitive rental housing market, senior citizens looking for apartments in Williamsport feel the squeeze. There aren't a lot of affordable options.

Help is on the way. Ground was broken last week on Grove Street Commons, a 32-unit apartment building in the city's East End.

In about 10 months, seniors looking for an apartment in Williamsport will have the option of some attractive apartments, managed by the Lycoming County Housing Authority, complete with solar panels and natural gas hook-ups.

It's important to know how this \$6.3 million project is getting financed.

More than \$1 million is being trafficked through Lycoming County government via the natural gas impact fees. The City of Williamsport is using its natural gas impact fees to pay for widening of Grove Street in preparation for more traffic.

The bottom line is that the financial numbers for this project probably don't work without the natural gas impact fees.

We point this out for the legions of natural gas foes who want to paint the industry as a negative or want to perpetrate the myth that the state gets nothing out of the industry because there is no severance tax.

The Grove Street Commons is merely the latest example among many projects keyed by use of the natural gas impact fees.

And best of all, these were local decisions. That won't happen if there is a severance tax. The revenue from a severance tax will go directly to Harrisburg and we will have to depend on good luck charms to make sure the money actually benefits communities in the heart of the natural gas industry work area.

History says the outcome of the tax will not be as fruitful as the impact fees.