

# Roxana students building business; improving community

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer  
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**ROXANA** - Students in the **Roxana High School Industrial Technology Program** have developed a business model to teach life skills and continuously give back to the community.

The co-op program is being led by **Career and Technical Education Division Coordinator Nathan Smay**. Smay is a graduate of **Jersey Community High School** and a veteran of **Operation Enduring Freedom** and **Operation Iraq Freedom**. He is helping students at **Roxana High School** start an operational business model, starting with Patriotic Support Plates, made of die cut 16-gauge steel. The money earned from the selling of these plates will go into the **Roxana Industrial Tech Program**, with a portion of each plate sale donated to the **Roxana D.A.R.E. Program**.

"Our students at Roxana are developing skills that will turn into careers," Smay said in an email. "We strive on fully developing our students from every aspect of a company. Teaching them the business and analytics, production and design, to marketing and sales. We are teaching our students a new business model that fully develops our students. Electives are always a topic of discuss when it comes to downsizing school districts. Roxana has a strong core of electives that truly benefits our students and their future. Developing a business model creates career skills that showcase what our electives are capable of at Roxana. The proceeds benefit the program and keep supplies, tools, machines and new technology available to the students. We would like to sustain our programs and grow them with the education of our students in mind."

**South Roxana Police Chief Bob Coles** praised the program in an email to Riverbender.com, saying it "is a really good cause, and something positive in our community." Coles also praised the Roxana School District in a release.

"Roxana sets itself apart from other schools with he many career class offerings," he said. "The school has business, family consumer science, culinary arts, manufacturing, welding, automotive, construction trades and cooperative education. The co-op program is a senior level class where they apply skills they have developed during their (career and technology education) classes. The school has students working for parks, offices, restaurants, schools, farms, etc. Our mission is to develop and expose as many students as possible to careers before leaving high school and gain work experience and knowledge."

The plates being offered by the students are shaped like the continental United States and are being offered for different pledges of support. A blue lined one is offered for police support, a red lined one for firefighters, an full colored American flag one is being offered for U.S. support, and another blue-backed one is "Back the Blue." They range in price from \$75-\$100 for the full-colored plate.

A small steel "Freedom Star" is also being offered for \$15 unpainted and \$25 painted. Orders can be placed by contacting Smay at (618) 254-7569 or via email at [nsmay@roxanaschools.org](mailto:nsmay@roxanaschools.org). Orders are completed within two weeks and the school can accommodate shipping for an additional cost.

"I would like to encourage more businesses and government agencies to invest in our community and the students within our school district," Coles said in a release "I believe businesses who can make a living in our area should reinvest into our youth and build a stronger community bond and strengthen ties with the businesses and people who support it."