



Tug Hill Times

Tug Hill Times is published semimonthly by the Tug Hill Commission for its board members, staff and associates, and the local representatives of the region's communities.

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Governor Visits Lewis County

Governor Andrew Cuomo visited the newly expanded lounge at the Ridgeview in Lowville on Monday, December 30th to announce \$4.5 million to boost winter tourism in upstate New York. The Governor made the announcement then suited up for a snowmobile ride. The Governor's appearance in Tug Hill fit his focus on upstate economic issues and the role that tourism plays in much of the upstate economy. He promoted tourism in the region by bringing both financial help and his personal cache. The photo depicts Tug Hill Commission Chairman Jan Bogdanowicz with Governor Cuomo.



Jefferson County Cooperative Stormwater Group

Newly designated as a Municipal Separate Stormwater Sewer System (MS4) area by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, chief elected officials and/or designees from the towns of LeRay, Rutland, Watertown; villages of Black River, Brownville, Carthage, Dexter, West Carthage; and the City of Watertown are holding a series of work sessions to review and advance next step efforts to comply with DEC regulations. Based upon shared service opportunities, representatives of the group elected to form a coalition for greater efficiencies and effectiveness and appointed the Jefferson County Soil & Water Conservation District (JCSWCD) to serve as stormwater program coordinator.

Having filed a Notice of Intent with DEC by the November 2013 deadline, the coalition has applied for \$100,000 through the DEC Water Quality Improvement Program to assist and support start-up costs associated with developing and implementing a 3-year work plan. Additionally, \$10,000 has been applied for through the Environmental Finance Center to hire interns to identify and map the location of infrastructure within the MS4 area.

In an effort to identify best practices in developing & implementing MS4 work plans, the coalition has invited representatives from Monroe & Chemung Counties to talk about the process, costs/budgets/fee structure & formulas, technical assistance & support and lessons learned. Currently, the coalition is working with attorneys to develop an Inter-municipal Agreement (IMA), and the NYS Tug Hill Commission, Jefferson County Planning and JCSWCD to provide general public education and outreach and staff training.

January 20, 2014

I Have A Dream



Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Training for Town and Village Officials Scheduled

Whether you are a newly elected official or a returning veteran, carrying out your official duties promises to be a challenging adventure. The prospects for progress and success are bright, but you may be wondering, *"What Do I Do Now ?"*

A workshop designed for both town and village officials has been scheduled for Wednesday, January 29, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at Kunsela Hall at SUNYIT, Marcy. This is an opportunity to talk about some of the common issues and concerns that face local officials. The session will have a panel of seasoned town and village officials from Oneida and Herkimer Counties that will share their experience and knowledge on a variety of issues that both town and village governments face on a regular basis.

Topics will include:

- *Roles and Responsibilities*
- *Agendas and Minutes*
- *Freedom of Information Law*
- *Home Rule Law*
- *Executive Sessions*
- *Powers and Duties*
- *Transitional Issues*
- *Open Meetings Law*
- *Financial*
- *Other Municipal Issues*
- *Town and Village Budgets*
- *Conducting Board Meetings*
- *Appointments*
- *Conflicts of Interest*

Pre-registration is requested by Friday, January 24 and is strongly encouraged to ensure enough handouts for those attending. Registration fee is \$15.00 and checks should be made out to the College Association. The session is being presented by the Local Government Education Committee of Oneida and Herkimer Counties. Additional registration forms are available at www.LGEC.org. You may also register by calling the Office of Continuing Professional Education at 315-792-7270.

Joint Infrastructure Management Initiative (JIMI) Update

The shared highway service JIMI project, funded in 2010 through a Local Government Efficiency grant, is almost complete. The 15 participants, comprised of Lewis County and its communities of Croghan, Denmark, Town & Village of Lowville, and Martinsburg, and Jefferson County and its communities of Adams, Alexandria, Champion, Clayton, LeRay, Town and Village of Philadelphia, and West Carthage, have worked together for the past four years to improve management of their highway and other assets. Through the project, 1,379 miles of road were driven, with pavement analysis done for all paved roads, and 20,100 signs, 5,755 culverts, 1,491 storm water assets, 1,024 hydrants, 832 manholes, 416 water valves, 410 bridges, and 9 meter boxes collected in the initial wave of data collection. Since then, some of the participants have continued to collect additional asset information.

The participants have worked together to share storing and viewing their data, using shared servers and a web browser that allows communities to view and maintain data. This provides them with mobile capabilities and the ability to take the asset management program with them out into the field. They can maintain their pavement, water, sewer, storm water, signs, bridges, signals, labor, equipment, materials, customers, etc. and will also be able to track their fleet maintenance within this program. Additionally, they can create tasks and work orders to help with tracking and create reports. The program allows for creating customized reports and also will be able to allow for customized assets to be tracked, like cemeteries. The group will also be able to share report templates with each other, reducing the redundancy of others having to create the same reports on their own. The group is saving a little over \$25,000 per year just in shared asset management software costs.

Jefferson and Lewis Counties are in an enterprise license agreement with Cartegraph currently for the software asset management portion. This means that if any other communities want to join the group from within one of those counties, they can. The cost per participant would actually go down per year, because it is a fixed fee and would be shared by more participants. Although the grant funding is ending, the communities plan to continue using the tools from the project to further help with the management of all their assets.

If you have any questions, please contact Mickey Dietrich at the NYS Tug Hill Commission at (315) 785-2380 or email him at mickey@tughill.org. The Jefferson County contact for communities is Rick Snow at Jefferson County Highway and the Lewis County contact for communities is Pat Mahar at the Town of Denmark.

Tug Hill Commission Meets in West Monroe



The Tug Hill Commission held its first meeting of 2014 on Monday, January 13 at 10:00 a.m. at the West Monroe Fire Station, West Monroe, New York. Guests included representatives of area towns and villages, including officials from Central Square, Constantia, West Monroe and Cleveland and the Oswego County legislature. In addition to the regular business of the Commission, Commissioners heard concerns and issues brought forth by the local officials and citizens in attendance.

A brief break followed the meeting, before the noon presentation by Dr. Jim Steenburgh on the Ontario Winter Lake-Effect System (OWLeS) study. The OWLeS study, sponsored by the National Science Foundation, is gathering and analysing data on lake effect snow from Lake Ontario during this productive 2013-14 lake effect snow season. The study team includes nine universities and colleges and the Center of Severe Weather Research. The OWLeS Study can be found online at <http://owles.org> and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OWLeSProject. Dr. Steenburgh's presentation is posted on the Tug Hill Commission web site at www.tughill.org/proj/owles-presentation.

The Tug Hill Commission does not have a regularly scheduled meeting in February. The Commission's next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 26, 2014 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Commission Offices in the Dulles State Office Building, 317 Washington Street, Watertown, New York. The public is welcome to attend Commission meetings, which include a public comment period at the end of the meeting.

Lowville Wrapping Up Zoning Work

The Village of Lowville is nearing completion of a major overhaul of its zoning law and map. The result is intended to simplify enforcement and bring the law into better compliance with the village's 2009 comprehensive plan. Revitalizing the downtown and ensuring quality development on the southern edge of the village are key components of the plan which will be implemented by the revised law.

Records Management Grants Due March 3rd

State Archives anticipates a deadline of March 3, 2014 for all Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund grants. All electronic applications must be submitted no later than 5:00 pm on March 3, 2014. The required paper signature forms that accompany your online application must also be postmarked no later than March 3, 2014. If you would like additional information regarding LGRMIF grants and their submission, please contact Kent Stuetz at kstuetz@mail.nysed.gov or 315-542-5909.

Association of Towns Newly Elected Officials Training Attended

Cooperative Tug Hill Council Circuit Rider Angie Kimball recently attended the Association of Towns Newly Elected Town Officials training held January 8th through 10th in Rochester. Topics at the 2-day conference included classes on effective meeting management, fiscal stress monitoring, municipal insurance, fiscal accountability, ethics, Freedom of Information and Open Meetings laws, personnel management, retirement reporting, planning and zoning basics, roads and bridges and several sessions dedicated to various aspects of budgeting. There were also "break-out sessions" directed towards town clerk training, including financial recordkeeping, minutes, records management, hunting and fishing licenses, and vital records.

Angie reported that the training was very effective and beneficial and would be valuable to Town officials, especially those who are new to the job. The staff members present from the Association of Towns, and the State Comptroller's Office were available to answer questions throughout the conference, and also provided references and resources for participants. A second session of the training was offered January 15th through 17th at the Desmond Hotel in Albany. Although there was a cost for the program, Angie felt the benefits gained from the training far outweighed the cost. The Association of Towns also offers training at its Annual Meeting and Training school which will be February 16th to 19th in New York City. For more information visit the Association of Towns website at www.nytowns.org.

JIMI Group Participant Seeing the Benefits

With the recent wild winter weather the North Country has been experiencing including high winds, cold temperatures, snow storms, and warm weather, there is bound to be some asset that is going to need attention. Case in point, Ernie Prievo the Water Superintendent for the Village of Carthage and recent addition to the JIMI group, had a call from a business that had a broken water pipe in their basement. Ernie responded to the call and went out searching for the curb stop (water shut off) for the water line. There was a large snow bank between the sidewalk and curb, so he took out his metal detector (wand) to locate the water valve. Ernie stated, "However, the sidewalk and curb was concrete reinforced with wire and rebar," which did not allow the metal detector to locate the curb stop.

Before calling in the labor and equipment needed to start clearing the snow to locate the curb stop, Ernie took out his GPS and used it to find the curb stop. He was then able to shut off the water line and stop the water from going into the basement of that business. "This saved us about an hour of time and about \$51.33 for an operator and loader," said Ernie about this one incident. He mentioned, though, that some things you can't put a price tag on, like stopping the water from running into the basement of that business faster than if he had to wait for a loader to come and assist.

Ernie also said that he is currently using the Cartegraph system to track snowplowing costs. He has a work order in place that tracks all snowplowing. So far, from November to January 4th, Village of Carthage crews have gone out 29 times, with a total cost of just over \$40,000. The cost includes wages, regular, call time and overtime rate, equipment and materials.

Ernie stated, "Once the winter season is over we will be able to see our total cost and have a much better handle on the amount of sand and salt we use, as well as other data that will be helpful." His experience will assist the larger JIMI group by sharing experiences and demonstrating how he did things. His work order for snowplowing could be duplicated by others.

Ernie was able to get up to speed on things very quickly in the JIMI project, because his neighbor to the west of him shared his experiences and assisted him. Tim Turck, who works in the Water Department at the Village of West Carthage, has been a part of the JIMI project since its beginning. He has been actively using the GPS and Cartegraph system throughout the duration of the project.

Tug Hill Commission 2014 Local Government Conference

We are already receiving registrations for our 25th Annual Local Government Conference to be held March 27 at Jefferson Community College! Registration forms were mailed out the beginning of January. If you did not receive a registration form you can visit our website www.tughill.org and download the form. Early registration ends March 5th.



We are looking forward to seeing you at the conference!

Contact us at:

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