



**March 11, 2016**

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# 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.

## Tug Hill Exhibit Draws Large Crowd



Leona Cheresnoski, Tug Hill Commissioner

Over 80 people attended the opening of the Venerable Folks of the Tug Hill exhibit at the Dodge Pratt Northam Art & Community Center last week. Artist Loretta Lepkowski has completed 13 portraits to date, with nine portrait subjects in attendance along with some family members, as well as future portrait subjects. The portraits are part of a larger project working with the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, TAUNY, and the

Tug Hill Commission to document the traditional Tug Hill way of life. There will be more opportunities to view the portraits and other exhibit materials at upcoming events.



Commission staff - Mickey Dietrich, GIS Specialist and Katie Malinowski, Executive Director

## New Justice Courts Consolidation Solutions Issue Paper

Commission staff recently completed a new issue paper entitled "Justice Courts Consolidation Solutions," to provide information to Tug Hill towns and villages that may be dealing with issues related to their justice courts. The commission has helped several communities identify ways to work together to share or consolidated services or otherwise collaborate with their neighbors as a way to conserve resources. The various options available can help communities save money, increase efficiency or deal with difficulties in filling a justice vacancy. The paper can be found at <http://www.tughill.org/publications/white-papers/>. Please contact Matt Johnson in Watertown or your circuit rider if your community would like to discuss options.

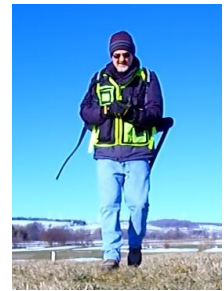
## Tug Hill Commission Job Announcement

The Tug Hill Commission currently has an opening for an Associate Director/ Director of Community and Regional Projects. The position is part of the commission's management team, and will oversee staff in the areas of natural resources, community development, GIS and community outreach. Interested persons should submit a cover letter and resume to executive director Katie Malinowski by April 11, 2016. The anticipated start date for the position is July 1, 2016.

The full job description is available on the commission's website, [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org).

## Commission Purchases New GPS Receiver

The commission recently purchased a new high accuracy bluetooth GPS receiver to allow for higher accuracy data collection on smartphone, tablet, and laptop applications. The unit can be borrowed free of charge by municipalities in the region to assist with their data gathering and updating efforts. There will be time limits on how long the unit can be borrowed for. Commission staff will provide training on the unit and can assist in importing the data gathered. For more information contact the Tug Hill Commission at (315) 785-2380. You can also reach Mickey Dietrich at [mick-ey@tughill.org](mailto:mickey@tughill.org).



## Great Lakes Sub Basin Work Group Meetings Held

Over 75 people attended Great Lakes sub basin work group meetings in West Carthage and Baldwinsville this week. The work group meetings, led by the DEC's Great Lakes program in partnership with multiple state agencies, seek to engage stakeholders in developing projects and achieving goals for water quality, natural resources, resiliency, sustainability, and recreation by applying an ecosystem based management (EBM) approach. Break out groups were held for three focus areas (water quality, natural resources, and sustainability/resiliency/recreation). Top actions in each of the three focus areas were identified, with the goal to advance these actions in a collaborate, partnership effort in the near term. Commission staff facilitated break out sessions focused on various natural resource topics identified by participants.

Additionally, staff from the NY Natural Heritage Program presented a new GIS-based tool called the Great Lakes Riparian Restoration Opportunity Assessment Tool. Scheduled to be released publicly at the end of this month, the tool incorporates several sources of data into a user-friendly, mapping based platform that will provide analysis to support planning and projects along rivers and streams across NY's Great Lakes watershed. Stakeholder feedback from the meetings is being integrated as the tool is finalized.

Principles of EBM include protection of the ecosystem structure, function, and key processes, integration of social, ecological, economic, and institutional perspectives, science informed decision making, collaboration, and adaptive management. For more information, visit the Great Lakes Action Agenda website at: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/91881.html>, or contact Emily Sheridan, NYSDEC Eastern Great Lakes Watershed Coordinator, at [emily.sheridan@dec.ny.gov](mailto:emily.sheridan@dec.ny.gov). You can also subscribe to the Great Lakes listserv to receive the latest news, funding, and events for NY's Great Lakes basin at: [https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/NYSDEC/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=NYSDEC\\_153](https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/NYSDEC/subscriber/new?topic_id=NYSDEC_153)

## Cornell Municipal Clerks Institute Save the Date

The 2016 Cornell Municipal Clerks Institute will be held July 10-14, 2016 in Ithaca. More information will be available shortly at <https://cardi.cals.cornell.edu/training/cmci>.

## NYS Water Infrastructure Improvement Act Round 2 Grant Applications Due April 15

The New York State Water Infrastructure Improvement Act of 2015 provides \$200 million in grant funding over three state fiscal years, including \$75 million this year to fund municipal wastewater and drinking water infrastructure projects that improve water quality and protect public health. If additional funds are appropriated in the enacted 2016-17 state budget, additional grant funding will be available for this round.

An informational webinar was held on February 24th. **A second webinar will be held on Tuesday, March 15.** For more information, go to the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation website, [www.efc.ny.gov](http://www.efc.ny.gov).

## **Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) Grants Due March 25**

The US Department of Homeland Security is offering SAFER grants for fire departments in two categories:

**Hiring of Firefighters** Grants provide financial assistance to help fire departments rehire firefighters who have been laid off, retain firefighters facing imminent layoffs, fill positions that were vacated through attrition, or hire new firefighters. **This category provides two-year grants to assist fire departments by paying the salaries and benefits of the SAFER-funded positions.**

**Recruitment and Retention of Volunteer Firefighters** Grants assist fire departments and national, state, local, or tribal organizations with the recruitment and/or retention of volunteer firefighters. **Recruitment and Retention Grants can have a period of performance of up to four years.**

See the website for more information and tools: <http://www.fema.gov/staffing-adequate-fire-emergency-response-grants>.

## **Oneida County Executive Urges Government Consolidation**

“Currently, we have 1 county, 3 cities, 26 towns, 17 villages, 30 school districts, 26 fire districts, 90 lighting districts, 36 sewer districts and 116 other special taxing districts. This structure is financially and operationally irresponsible and unsustainable,” said Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente last week during his State of the County address. With a \$3.8 million dollar gap resulting in lower than expected sales tax revenue, Picente said he will continue to encourage consolidations at the local level and will be changing the way sales tax is distributed. “No longer will we, nor can we, subsidize layers of government we cannot afford. This plan will impact municipalities and we will be there to assist them to adapt to a new reality. Our current formula does not properly reflect the functions and roles governments play in this county. The current structure doles out dollars to all levels with no regard to true economic impact. A new formula must reflect the needs and contributions of the larger governments.”

County legislators have been sharing Picente’s message with local governments across the NOCCOG region over the past week. Although Picente has not specified what type of changes in the sales tax sharing formula are anticipated, many boards have expressed concern for their ability to balance already stressed local budgets with the prospect of a diminished share. NOCCOG will continue to monitor the situation and offer guidance and support as more details emerge.

## **Town of Champion Comprehensive Planning Committee to Meet**

The Town of Champion appointed Comprehensive Planning Committee is meeting on March 22<sup>nd</sup> at the town office to review the 2009 Comprehensive Plan, outline a scope of work and schedule to guide next steps as well as discuss options/opportunities to include resident participation. According to the Tug Hill Commission Director of Planning, Phil Street, and Senior Planner, Matt Johnson, and contingent upon what issues/concerns the committee wants to address in the comp plan, the overall effort is projected to be completed in 12-18 months.

## **Lorraine Plan Nearing Completion**

The Town of Lorraine planning board is wrapping up work on a new comprehensive plan. Members have been meeting monthly over the past year analyzing community indicators and brainstorming on opportunities to improve the town. The first public hearing on the plan was held March 2<sup>nd</sup>. After review by the Jefferson County Planning Board, the plan will be finalized and adopted by the town board this spring.

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## Infrastructure Mapping in Remsen

The village of Remsen is continuing their efforts to map their infrastructure, which Mayor Francis Stacy has been heading up with the assistance of the Tug Hill Commission. To date they have collected GPS data for their street lights, sidewalks, hydrants, and some of their water valves. Next steps are to map curb stops and stormwater infrastructure.

At their meeting on March 8, commission staffer Mickey Dietrich presented the adjacent draft map showing their collected data.



## Central New York Community Solar Forum

The Central New York Community Solar Forum will be held on March 18th at the Genesee Grand Hotel in Syracuse, NY. This meeting is geared towards municipal officials, community stakeholders and solar developers with questions about how solar gardens can and should be built in New York. Some of these questions include:

- How much of the community solar project has to be “subscribed” before project developers will have enough confidence to begin construction?
- How should customer subscriptions be structured? What is the length of the contract and what terms (i.e., annual escalator) should be included?
- How large should community solar projects be sized and where should they be built in order to facilitate affordable and timely interconnection to utility distribution networks?
- Which technologies or third-party service providers can community solar project developers employ to manage their subscribers and utility reporting responsibilities, and how much will it cost?
- How can project developers that cannot exploit the federal Investment Tax Credit compete in this market?

To help address these questions, the [Central New York Regional Planning and Development Board](#), in partnership with NYSERDA and the Energy Democracy Alliance, will bring together local government representatives, community stakeholders and the solar industry for this all-day workshop, which will feature presentations from national experts and facilitated roundtable discussions. The full roster of speakers will be announced soon. **Register online today at [communitysolarforum.eventbrite.com](http://communitysolarforum.eventbrite.com).** There is a \$25 fee for the forum.