

TUG HILL TIMES



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FEBRUARY 1, 2019



New RACOG Brochure

The River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) approved a new brochure at their January meeting, which can be found online at <https://www.racog.org/new-2019-racog-brochure/>. Printed brochures are also available at member community offices.

Isaac Widrick, a graduate of North Country Community College, volunteered to work with Mickey Dietrich on producing the new brochure. A big thanks goes out to Isaac for his efforts. The brochure includes a map of the RACOG area, a list of board members and alternates, RACOG's mission statement, and 2018 accomplishments.

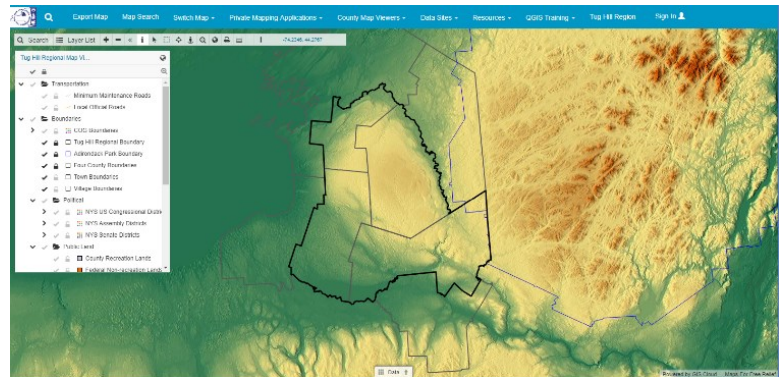
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Tug Hill Commission Online GIS Portal Training Video

Learn about the Tug Hill Commission's online GIS portal (<https://www.tughill.giscloud.com>) in the comfort of your own home. The 20-minute video explains how to use the commission's online GIS portal, viewable at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eo7CHSnIX-w>. The commission provides online and mobile GIS services to the region's towns and villages at no cost, with the exception of communities that want a mobile license dedicated for their individual use.

The commission is always looking for feedback from our local governments on how to improve these services, so feel free to contact Mickey Dietrich at mickey@tughill.org or (315) 681-5023.



Parish Planning Board Working on Zoning Update

The Parish Town Planning Board is wrapping up an amendment to the town's zoning law. Changes include new standards for hotels/motels, vacation rentals, accessory apartments, kennels, and signs. The updates will be reviewed by the town board and the Oswego County Planning Board in the coming months. A public hearing will likely be held in the late spring.

Northern Border Regional Commission Announces New Regional Forest Economy Partnership

The purpose of the new program is to assist rural communities in transitioning from a historic dependence on the forest-based economy to discovering new opportunities for economic diversity, independence and innovation. Approximately \$7 million is available. The investment goals of the program are:

- Increase opportunities to strengthen and expand the regional workforce in order to support a diversified local economy.
- Reuse and redevelop forest economy facilities and infrastructure, including vacant mill sites, to improve opportunities for new local economies.
- Develop vibrant communities, through infrastructure improvements, where people want to live, work and visit.
- Invest in the commercialization of new forest products and the development of new markets for forest product residuals.
- Invest in the emerging outdoor recreation economy.
- Prioritize projects that demonstrate a multi-state impact and/or regional benefit.

Maximum award size is \$1 million. Minimum award size is \$250,000. Local governments and non-profit entities are eligible entities. The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) will provide up to 80% of a project's cost depending on the counties that are being served. All four Tug Hill counties are considered "distressed" and only require a 20% match.

Letters of interest for the three rounds of funding are due March 15, May 15, and July 15. An evaluation team will evaluate letters to determine if they satisfy at least one of the following threshold requirements:

- Industry changes in employment as a result of the decline of the forest industry.
- Percent change in wages in the project area.
- Location of mill and other forest-based manufacturing closings in the past 20 years.
- County population losses.

Full applications will be by invitation only. For more detailed information, see the NBRC website at <http://www.nbrc.gov/content/Regional-Forest-Economy-Partnership>.

Jefferson Community College Education Center Opens in Lowville

Commission staff attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony at the grand opening of the Lewis County Jefferson Community College Education Center. This facility came into existence through multi-level coordination, cooperation and a shared vision of serving the county's population while addressing staffing issues that plague manufacturers locally and nationwide.

The ceremony's themes were partnership and determination to make the county's first center for higher education a reality. Despite many challenges along the way, project partners including the Lewis County, Jefferson Community College, Cornell Cooperative Extension and BOCES have seen the concept come to fruition.

The 22,000-square-foot building houses five classrooms, each equipped with massive state-of-the-art touch-screen smart boards; a lab with specialized hydraulic and mechatronic equipment to teach advance manufacturing skills; a fabrication or "fab" lab; an agro-forestry lab; a student lounge; administrative offices; a conference room and a suite for the Lewis County Cooperative Extension, which is moving its offices into the new space from its former Stowe Street location.



Congratulations to all involved in this project!

Learning About the Amish Community as Your Neighbors Training Session-February 20

The Local Government Education Committee of Oneida and Herkimer Counties is presenting a session to provide insights into the Amish community. Speakers will include Oneida County Sheriff Rob Maciol and NYS Police Sgt. Bernard Kennett to discuss traffic and other related issues.

Time will also be available for codes officers and other local officials to share and discuss experiences with successes and failures relating to codes and other challenges.

This session will take place on Wednesday, February 20th, 2019 at the Trenton Municipal Center on Route 12, Barneveld. Check in begins at 6:00pm with the session to begin promptly at 6:30pm. The fee is \$10 per person and will be collected at the door. For information or to register contact Jennifer at jarmstrong@tughill.org, (315) 371-7612; or lgec@lgec.org.

NY Society of American Foresters Presentation on Conservation Easements

The NY Society of American Forester's annual meeting was held last week in Syracuse, with over 300 attendees. The commission participated in a session entitled "Conservation Easements and Timberland Investment," with former executive director Bob Quinn serving as moderator, and current executive director Katie Malinowski, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust executive director Linda Garrett, and Central & Western Chapter of The Nature Conservancy's Jim Howe presenting. The East Branch of Fish Creek project was used as an example, and there were several good questions and comments from the audience.

Relatedly, the Governor's budget proposal includes a new category in the Environmental Protection Fund called Working Forest Conservation Easements. According to Rob Davies, State Forester, the program if finalized would provide funding to land trusts to purchase conservation easements from private forest owners, similar to what is now done on agricultural lands.

For more information on the NY Society of American Foresters, visit their website at <http://www.newyorksaf.org/>.

LED Street Light Conversion

Over the past year, the River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) has invited several groups to speak about potential conversion options for LED street lighting at their board meetings, including David Bradford and Jamie Rogers from the Adirondack North Country Association; National Grid; RealTerm Energy; and the NY Power Authority.

The RACOG board has looked at two potential options: utility owned and municipal owned. Utility owned means light fixtures would still be owned by National Grid, and municipal owned means the municipality would own the fixtures. With the municipal owned option, communities would work with an organization like the NY Power Authority for the design, construction, and procuring of a maintenance agreement for the fixtures. Each option is eligible for the same incentives, so it comes down to each municipality choosing what works best for them. Utility owned requires less money upfront, but municipal owned has been shown to have a higher savings over the long term. With each option, the municipality starts saving in the first year.



RACOG has been joined by other municipalities looking to form a larger group of interested parties in LED street light conversion. If you have questions related to the LED lighting project, contact Mickey Dietrich at (315) 681-5023 or mickey@tughill.org.

Windows 7 Continues Countdown to End-of-Service

Windows 7 support by Microsoft comes to an end on January 14, 2020. When Microsoft discontinues support, your computer will continue to work, but it will be increasingly insecure as hackers devise ways to attack your computer and Microsoft is no longer developing and issuing patches to close those vulnerabilities.

The new year brings 2019-20 budget preparation time to villages. This is a good time to check the municipal computer inventory and see which may be in need of replacing in the new fiscal year. Some towns may already have budgeted for computer replacement in 2019, but if there are any Windows 7 computers *not* scheduled for replacement in 2019, this should be taken into consideration during 2020 budget preparation time.

Microsoft's Lifecycle Policy and links to product support can be found at: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/hub/4095338/microsoft-lifecycle-policy>

Erosion & Sediment Control Training March 27

The Jefferson County Soil & Water Conservation District is sponsoring NYS DEC endorsed 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control Training on Wednesday, March 27, 2019 from 10 am to 2 pm. Cost is \$80/person, non-refundable, and includes lunch and one Blue-Book "Lite." The workshop will be held at Old Mc Donald's Farm, Sackets Harbor.

For more information and to register by 3/21/2019, see <https://jeffersoncountyswcd.org/registration-form/>.

NYS Canal Corporation Announces Recreational Boat Toll Waiver for 2019 and 2020

The state Canal Corporation recently announced that it will waive tolls on the Canal System for the 2019 and 2020 seasons, continuing a waiver that began in 2017 and 2018 to celebrate the bicentennial of the Erie Canal and the centennial of the Barge Canal. Pleasure boat traffic was up by three percent in 2018.

Oneida Lake, at the southern boundary of the Tug Hill region, is part of the state canal system.

The Canal Corporation also announced that the 2019 navigation season will run from May 17 to October 16, starting the Friday of the week before Memorial Day and ending the Wednesday after Columbus Day.

More information about the Canal Corporation and the canal system can be found on their web site, www.canals.ny.gov Notices to Mariners about dates and hours of operation, openings and closings and more can be found at: www.canals.ny.gov/wwwapps/tas/notices.

Contact Us

NYS Tug Hill Commission
317 Washington Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Phone: 315-785-2380
Toll Free within the region:
1-888-785-2380
Email: tughill@tughill.org

Visit us at:

Web: www.tughill.org
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/TugHillCommission

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