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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.

Energy Committee Researches Opportunities in Town of Vienna

A group of concerned citizens in the town of Vienna is actively seeking opportunities for cost cutting and improving energy efficiency with the creation of an energy efficiency committee. The committee comprised of town board members, planning board members, and interested citizens is researching effective ways to reduce energy costs at three user levels: household and/or business, town-owned facilities, and community wide.

During the January meeting, Deputy Commissioner of Engineering for Oneida County Department of Public Works Mark Laramie spoke of several solar energy projects undertaken at the County level, including the installation of solar panels at the county's correctional facility as well as information about obtaining financial assistance for municipal projects through NYSERDA.

Several committee members also provided an overview of various topics they have researched, including hydroelectric facilities, the Municipal Electric & Gas Alliance, and NY Prize; as well as options for individual homeowners such as passive solar designs, new "acandescent" bulbs, and cold climate heat pumps.

The committee is welcoming new members willing to contribute and will continue to research a wide variety of potential energy opportunities. Findings of the committee are being shared with the community quarterly via quarterly newsletter, which is available on the town website at www.tovlookup.org.

Tug Hill Commission to Meet

Monday, April 20th

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Village of West Carthage Offices, 61 High Street, West Carthage

Town of Champion Reviews Resource Sharing During State of Emergency

At a special meeting of the Town of Champion Board on March 23rd, members reviewed information about resource sharing during a declared state of emergency within the local area under the Intrastate Mutual Aid Program through the NYS Homeland Security and Emergency Services. The program will allow municipalities to share resources without prior memorandums of understanding during a declared emergency while providing reimbursement of associated costs as well as addressing liability and workers compensation issues/concerns.

According to Highway Superintendent Sech, the program is similar to a cooperative program through the Jefferson County Highway Department and does not obligate the town resources or personnel to participate. Following a lengthy discussion, no action was taken to provide board members more time to review and research the information.

New Effort to Help Facilities Convert to BioEnergy

The NYS Biomass Energy Alliance has secured funding through the US Forest Service to start a new bioenergy initiative. The new program is designed to provide facilities the information and technical assistance they need to make the decision to convert from fossil fuels to wood based energy. Called the New York State Wood Energy Team (NYSWET), it will work in two areas to build the market for wood energy in New York.

Education. The team will conduct outreach about the benefits of wood energy systems to key stakeholders through educational Bioenergy Labs in the Catskills, Southern Tier and North Country.

The goal? 10 medium- to large-scale systems installed or under construction by year 3, with financing in place for an additional 15 systems. The NYSWET finance committee is working to identify innovative financing solutions and ensure organizations can secure funding for their projects.

Supply Chain. The team will continue to build knowledge of the infrastructure necessary for a viable wood energy market. The NYSWET supply chain evaluation committee is developing recommendations to ensure infrastructure is in place to meet new demand for cord wood, pellets and chips.

Bioenergy labs in the North Country will be scheduled for later this year. The format of each lab is an onsite meeting at a location that is currently using bioenergy, followed by time with the NYSWET to provide individual evaluations on the potential for installing a wood energy system to meet heating needs. To make the most of this free opportunity, participants should check their records and bring the following information:

- How much current fuel is used annually (gallons, cubic feet)
- Annual cost of current fuel
- Size (capacity) and age of your current heating system

If your building(s) is a good candidate for wood energy, the team can work with you to complete a pre-feasibility study as well as help you identify available grants and financing. The NYSWET provides free and cost-shared services to local government, schools, and businesses of all kinds on conversion to modern and efficient wood heating systems.

If interested in being kept aware of upcoming labs in the Tug Hill region, contact Alice Brumbach, abrumbach@newyorkbiomass.org, www.newyorkbiomass.org, (607) 316-3437, or let Katie or Jennifer at the Tug Hill Commission know of your interest.

Last year New York residents spent more than \$3 billion on fossil fuels to heat their homes. 78% of those dollars left the state. That's not good for New York or for the earth. Wood energy is the original form of renewable energy in New York. It is a carbon-neutral energy source and reduces reliance on fossil fuels. Over the last ten years, the technology for wood energy systems in the United States has improved significantly. Modern wood energy choices are clean, efficient, low-emission, low-maintenance systems. Systems include commercial boilers, whole house systems that can be installed in a basement and operated by a thermostat and modern wood and pellet stoves. The appliances use pellets, chips or cord wood.

SAVE THE DATE Black River Watershed Conference, June 3rd SAVE THE DATE

2015 Clean Energy Economy Conference

June 11-12 at SUNY Polytechnic Institute, Utica

A collaboration between the North Country and Mohawk Valley Economic Development regions, the Clean Energy Economy Conference is an educational and networking event that encourages the exchange of knowledge, stimulates conversation, and creates business opportunities.

The conference is organized by the Adirondack North Country Association in Saranac Lake and The Genesis Group in Utica and is designed to serve as a forum for individuals, businesses, educators, community leaders, industry professionals and others to share information about the science and economics of clean energy across the region. For more information and to register visit <http://www.ncenergyconference.org/>

LOCAL ZONING AND BUILDING PERMIT PROCEDURES – *Part 1* LAND USE PLANNING WORKSHOP NOTICE

For many communities, development projects adhere to a local Zoning Law as well as the New York State Fire Prevention and Building Code.

Of course procedures and staffing vary from community to community. Typically the local Zoning Law regulates land use and is enforced by a Zoning Enforcement Officer, while the Building Code regulates the construction of buildings and is enforced by a Code Enforcement Officer. This may or may not be the same person in a given community. As communities administer and amend their Zoning Law within their jurisdictions, where the Zoning process ends and the Building Code process begins can be an important consideration.

This session seeks to heighten an awareness for local Zoning and Building Code procedures and to provide a forum for discussing one municipality's zoning administration process and two County Code Offices' administration of the NYS Fire Prevention and Building Code at the local level. Ample time for Q and A will be provided.

The three speakers are:

Eric Sheldon, Town of Henderson Zoning Enforcement Officer resides in the Town of Lorraine, is a self-employed builder with 40 years of experience, and has been an elected official for the Town of Lorraine for the past 20 plus years.

David Ross, Director for the Jefferson County Fire Prevention and Building Code Department, has worked in the Dept. for the last 24 years. Prior to that he was an inspector in the Bureau of Code Enforcement in the City of Watertown for 4 years. He served on the NYS Code Council from 2006-2012. He resides in Adams where he has been the Zoning Officer for the Town and Village since 1994.

Ward Dailey, Sr. Code Enforcement Officer for Lewis County since 2006, was previously in residential and heavy construction throughout the United States from Texas to Maine and large scale projects (throughout the US). He also has a background in land surveying as a surveyor in the United States Military.



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Local Zoning Permit and Building Permit Procedures *Part 1*

MONDAY

April 27, 2015

6:30-8:30 pm

Jules Center Amphitheater

Room 6-002

Jefferson Community College

1220 Coffeen St.

Watertown, NY

AGENDA

6:30-6:35 pm Welcome and Opening Remarks

6:35-8:00 pm Presentation by Eric Sheldon, David Ross, and Ward Dailey

8:00-8:30 pm Question and answer period

RSVP's are strongly encouraged by
Thursday, April 23rd

Please call Jefferson County Planning
Department at (315) 785-3144 or
Email: planning@co.jefferson.ny.us

*If approved by your municipality,
this workshop can provide two (2) hours
of training to meet the
NYS Municipality Training Requirement.*

Note to Planning Board and ZBA
Chairpersons and Clerks – Please share this
notice with other Board members and
officials in your community.

Contact us at:

**NYS Tug Hill
Commission**
317 Washington St.
Watertown, NY 13601

We are located on the
6th Floor of the Dulles
State Office Building.

Phone: 315-785-2380
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The North Country Earth Day Celebration

April 18th at Thompson Park

The North Country Earth Day celebration is scheduled for Saturday, April 18 at the New York State Zoo at Thompson Park in Watertown from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. all around the zoo with exhibits, activities, drawings and information for all ages. The event is put on by the New York State Zoo and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in collaboration with many local agencies and organizations.

There will be a day full of games and activities designed to educate and inspire people of all ages. Smokey Bear and Woodsy Owl will greet young people, there will be free trees, Passport for kids to fill out for a prize, plus an opportunity to donate and recycle your old clothes and textiles.

This event is made possible through the combined efforts of many agencies and organizations. In addition to the NYS Zoo and DEC, come visit and see interactive exhibits set up by; The Development Authority of the North County, Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, Minna Anthony Common Nature Center, Save the River, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Black River Chapter of the Adirondack Mountain Club, Fourth Coast, Inc, Thousand Islands Land Trust and Jefferson County Public Health.

Admission is \$1 for adults, age 12 and under **FREE**. Families are encouraged to visit, and girl and boy scout leaders are encouraged to line up a field trip to visit the displays. For more information, visit NYSZOO.org or contact the DEC's Stephen Litwhiler at 315-785-2252.



Residential Brush Burning Ban in Effect

As temperatures are warming, the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is reminding New Yorkers that residential brush burning in towns with less than 20,000 residents is prohibited through May 14.

"Along with the milder temperatures that come with spring, the risk for wildfires also increases," DEC Commissioner Joe Martens said. "New York prohibits residential burning during the high-risk fire season to reduce the number of wildfires and protect people, property and natural resources. Since being enacted in 2009, the ban has been very effective in reducing the number of wildfires, and we want people to be aware that they need to put safety first."

Open burning of debris causes is a leading cause of spring wildfires in the state. As grasses and leaves dry, and there is little green vegetation, wildfires can start and spread easily and be fueled by winds.

New York's strict restrictions on open burning since 2009 have helped prevent wildfires and reduce emissions. Regulations allow residential brush fires in towns most of the year, but prohibit burning in spring months - March 16 through May 15 - when most wildfires occur. Campfires using charcoal or untreated wood are allowed, but should never be left unattended. Burning garbage or leaves is prohibited year-round. Since the spring ban was enacted, the average number of spring fires per year has decreased by 43.2 percent, from 3,297 in 2009 to 1,425 in 2014. To learn more about the regulations, visit <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/58519.html>