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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.

Dodge Pratt Northam Exhibit to Feature Tug Hill Folks

On Thursday, March 3, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., the public is invited to attend an opening reception of the "Venerable Folks of the Tug Hill and more" exhibit at the Dodge Pratt Northam Art and Community Center in Boonville. Lewis County artist Loretta Lepkowski is currently working on a series of portraits highlighting "Venerable Folks of the Tug Hill." Several Tug Hill Sages are among those featured in Loretta's paintings.

Her upbringing on a small dairy farm in Lewis County has been the germinating seed of Loretta's interest in creating narrative paintings of the local rural individuals. In an effort to capture the full richness of the lives and stories of these "salt of the earth" resourceful people, this has become a collaborative project with Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, Tug Hill Commission and Traditional Arts of Upstate NY (TAUNY). This is currently a work in progress where a future larger, multi-media display is envisioned.

DOS Municipal Restructuring Fund Announced

The NYS Department of State (DOS) is launching a new \$25 million program meant to assist local government and school officials with developing transformative projects that will lead to property tax reductions. The Municipal Restructuring Fund (MRF) is a grant program funded through the 2015-16 state budget with a continuous recruitment process. Projects submitted through the program will be ranked as they are received based upon established criteria until funding is exhausted. Projects will be ranked by metrics that include potential impact across local governments, service delivery areas and municipal functions, and have potential for long-term property tax savings.

DOS plans to identify local leaders with transformative ideas, help them define viable projects with likely financial and service delivery impacts, and invest in development plans and implementation processes that will test and refine plan assumptions. **Staff from DOS will be presenting at a session at the March 31 Tug Hill Local Government Conference, and will be available for one-on-one consultations throughout the day.** For more information, contact the Division of Local Government Services, at 518-473-3355.

Next Tug Hill Commission Meeting

March 30 at 4:00 p.m. at the Commission Office

317 Washington St., Watertown, NY.

Champion Comprehensive Plan Update

The town of Champion discussed and approved a motion to review and update their comprehensive plan at their February board meeting. The town will undertake the effort with technical assistance and support from commission planning staff. Representatives from the town board and planning board were appointed to serve on a committee to guide next steps in developing the plan.

Champion last worked on comprehensive planning efforts in March 2009 with the River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) to standardize language and definitions in zoning and subdivision laws throughout the four communities. Newly elected town supervisor Bruce Ferguson raised the issue with the board, feeling that it was time to update the work done in 2009 to strengthen the intent of existing town zoning and subdivision laws. In addition, Supervisor Ferguson stated that “federal and state funding agencies are also requiring applicants to submit a current comprehensive plan as part of the documentation that will support a funding request.”

Water Infrastructure Grant Applications Available

The NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation has announced a new round of water infrastructure grants, due April 15, 2016. There is \$75 million available to local governments for drinking water and wastewater projects. A webinar is scheduled for Wednesday, February 24 at 10 am to provide an overview of the grant criteria and application process for this round of funding. More information is available on EFC's website, <http://www.efc.ny.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=609#>.



**Local Government Conference
March 31, 2016 at Jefferson Community College**
Early Bird deadline ends March 9th

NYS Archives LGRMIF 2016-2017 Grants Authorized – March 14, 2016 Deadline

The New York State Archives is pleased to announce its Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF) grants for 2016-2017. The new LGRMIF grant application guidelines are now available on the NYS Archives website http://www.archives.nysed.gov/grants/grants_lgrmif.shtml and the eGrants system is now open for the 2016-2017 grant cycle. All applications must be submitted via the State Archives eGrants system by 5:00 PM on Monday, March 14, 2016.

The LGRMIF supports three types of projects: Individual projects that involve a single applicant; Shared services projects, involving two or more applicants; Demonstration projects, to develop model electronic records programs that can be replicated by other local governments. This year demonstration project grants will focus on Records-Lifecycle Management of Electronic Mail projects, or eMail Management projects.

For additional information please contact Kent Stuetz at NYS Archives, CNY Regional Office, (315)542-5909, kent.stuetz@nysed.gov or the State Archives Grants Administration Unit at archgrants@nysed.gov.

Wilna/Carthage Shared Planning Board

Initiated in December 2015, the town of Wilna and village of Carthage municipal and planning boards have requested technical assistance and support from the Tug Hill Commission to explore opportunities to form a shared planning board. Commission Director of Planning Phil Street and Mark Gebo, town and village attorney are working to draft an inter-municipal agreement that will guide the process in forming the new board.



Fiscal Oversight/Red Flags for Fraud Workshops

Presented by the Office of the State Comptroller's Syracuse Regional Office, this training program is designed to assist village and town officials in carrying out their fiscal oversight responsibility. Topics to be covered include:

- What are the board's fiscal oversight duties?
- What is the purpose of an audit and who is responsible?
- An overview of the records of the chief fiscal officer (Supervisor or Treasurer)
- An overview of the fiscal responsibilities of the Justice and Clerk
- Important audit concerns and key records to look at (a checklist approach)
- What do you do if questions are raised during the audit process?
- What are the major red flags for fraud you should watch for?
- What do you do if you suspect fraud?



Two identical workshops will be held in early March.

Wednesday, March 2, 2016
 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
 Trenton Municipal Center
 8520 Old Poland Rd
 Barneveld, NY 13304

Thursday, March 3, 2016
 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.
 Tailwater Lodge
 52 Pulaski St
 Altmar, NY 13302

The training is free. **Registration is requested by March 1, 2016.** Please contact the Tug Hill Commission at 315-785-2380 or 888-785-2380 to RSVP.

Eastern Great Lakes Action Agenda Work Group Meetings March 7 & 8

NYSDEC invites regional stakeholders, including local, state, and federal government organizations and agencies, local, county and regional planners, educational institutions, and not for profit organizations to participate in a basin wide partnership to advance ecosystem-based management opportunities for New York's Great Lakes basin, as identified in the state's interim Great Lakes Action Agenda (GLAA). Join us in March where the next round of work group meetings will:

- help us select critical actions within the draft sub basin work plans for focused collaboration and implementation,
- present on a new riparian restoration and protection planning tool created for New York's Great Lakes basin by the NY Natural Heritage Program.

Join us for one or more of the following meetings:

NE Lake Ontario Work Group -- Monday, March 7, 10:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

West Carthage Fire Hall, 61 High St. Carthage, NY 13619

SE Lake Ontario Work Group -- Tuesday, March 8, 10:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Beaver Lake Nature Center, 8477 E. Mud Lake Rd. Baldwinsville, NY 13027 (Optional hike following meeting)

Please RSVP to greatlakes@dec.ny.gov by February 29. Please indicate which work group meeting you'll be attending.

Contact Emily Sheridan, Eastern Great Lakes Watershed Coordinator Emily.Sheridan@dec.ny.gov, 315-785-2382 for additional information.

