



January 20, 2012

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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Tug Hill Commission Included in the Governor's Proposed 2012 - 2013 Budget

The Tug Hill Commission was pleased to learn that it is included in the Governor's proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The Commission is being treated the same as other agencies, boards and commissions and has included a 2.5% reduction in its budget. This will allow us to maintain a level operation and should hopefully allow us to fill vacancies that have remained unfilled.

Cooperative Tug Hill Council News

With the good news about the inclusion of the Commission in the proposed State budget, it is hoped that the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) will be up and running with a new circuit rider very soon. As we told you last June, Jane Jones retired as of May 31, 2011. For 20 years, Jane was the circuit rider for the CTHC, the largest and oldest Council of Government on the Hill. Various Commission staff has been attending the town board meetings that Jane attended and has been carrying out the essential tasks which must be done for the CTHC while awaiting permission from the NYS Division of Budget to replace this vital position.

Erosion and Sediment Control Workshop Well Attended

Fifty north country residents received Erosion and Sediment Control (E&SC) certificates in the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) four hour workshop titled "Protecting New York's Natural Resources with Better Construction Site Management" on January 19, 2012 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Watertown. This training is endorsed by the DEC for "Trained Contractors" and Certain "Qualified Inspectors" who must receive 4 hours of certified training every three years to satisfy requirements under the Construction Activity State Pollution Discharge Elimination System General Permit. In addition, code enforcement officers were also able to receive credit for this training. The Jefferson County Water Quality Coordinating Committee (WQCC), chaired by the Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), provided 100% of the funding for this workshop with no cost to participants. The Tug Hill Commission, also a member of the Jefferson County WQCC, assisted with the coordination of the event. Additional WQCC agencies represented at the workshop included SWCD, Fort Drum, NYS Department of Transportation, and the NYS DEC, which provided the certified trainer, Steve Botsford, for the workshop. Thanks to everyone for their attendance and assistance!

Flood Insurance Rate Maps Review for Oneida and Herkimer Counties

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) will be holding two Public Open House Meetings on **February 6th** and **February 7th** regarding the newly proposed Flood Insurance Rate Maps for Herkimer and Oneida Counties.

The meetings are the first opportunity for **property owners** to review the maps and to ask questions about whether the new mapping will affect insurance requirements on their property. There will be no formal presentation at these meetings but residents are encouraged to stop by to ask questions about floodplain management, flood mapping, and/or the National Flood Insurance Program. Staff from the NYS DEC and FEMA will be available between 4:00 PM and 8:00 PM for direct question and answer sessions with residents.

The meeting in Herkimer County will take place on **Monday, February 6, 2012** at McLaughlin Center - Herkimer County Community College. The meeting in Oneida County will take place on **Tuesday, February 7, 2012** at Kunsela Hall - SUNY Institute of Technology - Marcy Campus. If you have any questions or require assistance, please contact the NYS-DEC floodplain management section at (518) 402-8185.



Boonville Snowfest Times Two

The Boonville Snowfest Committee had to make a difficult decision last week due to the unusual winter weather this year and lack of snow. The popular annual winter event will be divided into two weekends for this year. The Eastcoast Snowcross will compete at the Boonville Fairgrounds on January 28 and 29. This is a new event this year and it is expected to be a real crowd pleaser. You can find out more about Snowcross and the competitors at www.eastcoastsnowcross.com. Two weekends later, on February 10, 11 and 12, the Annual Snow Festival events will be held. The Northern New York Vintage Snow Sled racers will be racing in Friday and Saturday and the eastern Pro Tour will race on Sunday. Other events planned for the weekend include a torchlight snowmobile parade, fireworks, redneck curling, ice craving, sled dog demonstrations, and snowmobile industry exhibits. Up to date information about both weekends can be found at <http://boonvillesnowfestival.com/>.

Tax Cap Workshop February 16 at SUNY IT

Representatives from the Syracuse Regional Office of the State Comptroller will present timely information to assist officials in preparing their annual budgets. A tax levy limit ("tax cap") training workshop has been scheduled for Thursday, **February 16, 2012** at Kunsela Hall, SUNYIT, Utica. The sign in will start at 6:00 PM with the session running from 6:30 - 8:30 PM. Pre-registration is requested.

This training program is designed to be timely in assisting village officials in preparing their annual budgets. Town officials and fire districts/departments are also encouraged to attend. Topics to be covered include:

- An overview of the tax levy limit legislation
- Budgetary responsibilities for working within the tax levy limits
- How to calculate your government's tax levy limit
- Tools available for assisting local officials
- Sample calculations and other resources
- What happens if you discover an error in the calculation?
- Ample question and answer period time

The workshop is sponsored by the Local Government Education Committee of Oneida and Herkimer Counties. The workshop fee is \$15.00 and light refreshments will be available. Registration information can be found at: <http://lgec.org/content>. Checks should be made out to The College Association and be sent to: Continuing Professional Education, LGEC Registration, SUNYIT, 100 Seymour Road, Utica, NY 13502. Phone: 315-792-7270, Fax: 315-792-7278.

The Town of Lee has invited officials from Chesapeake Energy, a company conducting hydrofracking in Pennsylvania, to present a public session on the controversial gas drilling process. The meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, February 16 at 6:00 PM** at the Town Hall (5808 Stokes Lee Center Road, Lee Center, NY 13363). Town residents, as well as other local municipalities are invited to attend. The session is being held for people to learn more about hydrofracking and will be for informational purposes only, not for debate. There will be time for questions and the meeting is open to local officials in Oneida County and the public.

The Lee Town Board decided last month not to pursue a ban or moratorium against hydrofracking, but to continue reviewing the issue, including potential future legislation if needed. The upcoming informational meeting is being held to gather information from a different perspective so local officials will have a better understanding of the issue before final decisions are made. Hydro Relief Web of Oneida County, a citizen's group opposing hydrofracking, has been attending municipal board meetings in Oneida County urging towns to take the formal action of enacting moratoriums or approving a permanent ban against hydrofracking. About 15 towns in the county have enacted moratoriums.

Some of the Chesapeake Company's hydrofracking locations in Pennsylvania were visited last month by a group of Oneida County legislators. Among them was legislator Brian Mandryck, R-17, Lee, who spoke about the trip at a recent Lee Town Board "workshop" session and is helping to coordinate the local visit by Chesapeake.



Tours of South Lewis Woodchip Biomass Boiler February 22



The new woodchip boiler at the South Lewis Central School District will be available for tours in two different venues on **Wednesday, February 22, 2012**. At 1:00 PM, there will be an information meeting and tour for businesses and organizations in the North Country that would like to learn more about the technology and see it in a brand-new application. The event will kick-off in the high school auditorium with a brief presentation about the system and the design and construction process. Joining us will be: **Barry Yette, South Lewis Business Administrator, Steven Klempa, Principal Architect, SEI Design and Aaron McConnell, Principal Engineer, M/E Engineering.**

Following the presentation will be tours of the biomass building, which will allow participants to view the storage area, feeding system, boiler and control system. There will be ample time for questions & answers with the presenters. If you plan to attend the 1:00 PM session, pre-registration is required, contact the NYS Tug Hill Commission toll-free in the region 888-785-2380 or katie@tughill.org.

That evening, from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM, there will be a public open house for the community to view the newly commissioned woodchip biomass heating system. There will be representatives from South Lewis CSD and Cornell Cooperative Extension on hand with educational materials on a variety of topics related to heating with biomass on the residential and commercial scale.

Both events are being sponsored by the Drum Country Biomass Working Group. Members of the Drum Country Biomass Working Group include: CCE of Jefferson and Lewis County, St. Lawrence County Planning Office, NYS Tug Hill Commission, Lewis County Economic Development Office, Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency, Development Authority of the North Country, Black River/St. Lawrence River RC&D Council, Fort Drum, and private organizations and individuals interested in biomass energy.

NYS Tug Hill Commission

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Thank you!

Local Government Conference
Thursday March 29, 2012 at
Jefferson Community College
Visit our Website at [http://
www.tughill.org/proj/annual-lgc-
2012/](http://www.tughill.org/proj/annual-lgc-2012/)

to download a registration form or
call us and we'll send you one!

Learn to Burn - Heating with Wood

What: An educational event for anyone that is currently or considering heating their home with cord wood or wood pellets, novice and veterans alike.

When: Thursday, January 26, 2012, 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM

Where: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County, Outer Stowe Street, Lowville

Cost: \$5 per person

Registration: Please Call CCE Lewis County at 376-5270 to reserve your spot.

Come learn about buying and drying firewood, best burn practices, basic wood stove maintenance, and an overview of the latest high-efficiency technology now available. Each participant will receive a 16-page booklet outlining most of what you need to know to heat as cleanly and efficiently as possible! Please contact the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Lewis County office if you have any special needs.



Albion to Hold Public Input Meeting on Elementary School Reuse

Given the recent and anticipated closures of three elementary schools in the area, communities are working with the APW school system to develop a plan for reuse of the elementary schools in Williamstown (closed in 2008), Altmar and Parish (both scheduled for closure in 2012). The Towns of Albion, Parish and Williamstown together with the Villages of Parish and Altmar are seeking input from the community for potential reuse options for these buildings.

To provide residents with opportunity to participate in the development of the adaptive reuse plan, a public meeting will be held on Monday, **February 6, 2012, at 7:00 PM at the Altmar Elementary School Cafeteria located at 52 Pulaski Street, Altmar.** A summary of the work done to date will be presented at the meeting and comments and input into the potential reuse of the school buildings, in particular the Altmar Elementary, will be solicited. Public meetings meeting specific to the other two buildings have already been held.

Those interested in providing input that are unable to attend the meeting should contact Katie Malinowski at the Tug Hill Commission, toll free (888) 785-2380.