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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 Gets a Face Lift

It has been 21 years since an exhibit featuring the Tug Hill region was erected at the NYS Zoo at Thompson Park. The Tug Hill exhibit has recently undergone a renovation and on Wednesday, June 17, representatives from the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust and the NYS Zoo at Thompson Park came together with exhibit donors for a ribbon cutting event. Constructed from recycled barn wood, the exhibit's central feature is a four sided "gem" which highlights the people, culture, geography, wildlife and water resources of the Tug Hill region on colorful graphic panels. A rotating inner drum allows the visitor to see a variety of photographs as it rotates. A new feature of the exhibit is a display of antique farm tools.

During the ceremony, THTLT board chair and former Tug Hill Commission Executive Director Bob Quinn drew attention to the two-fold mission of the land trust: land protection and education about the uniqueness of the region. Ben Coe, the Commission's very first Executive Director, cut the ribbon marking the opening of the new exhibit.

The Tug Hill exhibit renovation was made possible by the generous support of the Northern New York Community Foundation, with a portion specifically from the David G. Gregor Community Fund. Other major donors to the project are Peggy & Ben Coe, Dave & Mary Stone, T. Urling & Mabel Walker, RBC Wealth Management, NYS Zoo at Thompson Park, NYS Tug Hill Commission, and Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust volunteers & board.



Bartow To Head ESFPA; Malinowski Named Acting Executive Director

On the heels of the announcement of his retirement from the State, John Bartow has been named the new Executive Director of the Empire State Forest Products Association. Headquartered in Rensselaer, the non-profit organization works on behalf of the forest products industry, to improve the business climate while promoting the management of New York's forests to meet the resource needs of today and for future generations. More information can be found on their website, www.esfpa.org.

At the June 22 Commission meeting, the Commissioners appointed Katie Malinowski as the acting Executive Director while efforts are underway to fill the position permanently. Katie is well known to Tug Hill communities, as she has worked for the Commission since 1998 in a variety of positions, most recently as Director of Natural Resources. Feel free to contact her at (315) 785-2380 or katie@tughill.org during this time of transition.



Commissions Felicia Passino Graduates from Jefferson Leadership Institute Class of 2015

Congratulations to Felicia Passino, our Administrative Aide on her graduation in June from the Jefferson Leadership Institute. JLI is a nine-month leadership development program that immerses participants in community issues through eleven full day sessions studying history, non-profit organizations, agriculture, economic development, government, media, healthcare, education, tourism, public safety and Fort Drum and a weekend retreat to kick it off on leadership skills. The curriculum enable participants to recognize their leadership potential, build strong relationships and encourage involvement in effecting positive change in their communities. Students study the components that make up a healthy community and the critical issues affecting its economic sectors.



As part of Felicia's class project she took part in a "Day of Caring" which included service projects at New Day Children's Center and The Children's Home of Jefferson County.

The Greater Watertown-North Country Chamber of Commerce established



JLI in 1991. The program is sponsored by the Northern Credit Union and the Samaritan Medical Center, and currently has over 430 alumni.

Online Training for PB & ZBA's Available

Online training for planning and zoning board members is available on NYS Department of State, Division of Local Government Service's website. Two videos include "Ethical Standards for Planning and Zoning Boards" and "Locally Unwanted Land Use Regulation." Online interactive courses include: "Conducting Meetings and Hearings," "Conducting Meetings & Hearings," "Making A Good Record," "Planning Board Overview," and "Zoning Board of Appeals Overview." Visit DOS website at these locations for more information: www.dos.ny.gov/lg/onlinetraining/interactive.html, www.dos.ny.gov/lg/lut/Training_Video.html, www.dos.ny.gov/lg/lut/index.html.

NOCCOG Communities Preparing CFA's

Tug Hill Commission staff are busily preparing several consolidated funding applications for communities in the Northern Oneida County Council of Governments.

With the July 31st deadline for submission nearing, the final details are being prepared for the Village of Camden's Riverwalk project, which will construct a new walking trail along the riverfront in the village connecting the downtown business district to an extensive existing trail system within Forest Park. Camden is also applying for funding through the NYS Office of Community Renewal for façade improvements in the downtown business district through the Main Street Program.

The NYS Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation will also be receiving funding applications for park improvements in the Town of Floyd. Floyd is seeking grant funding to improve upon an existing 73 acre park including handicap accessible bathrooms, extended trails, and fitness stations. In the nearby Town of Ava, local officials and community members hope to transform a newly acquired property into a park with the aid of funding, including the construction of a pavilion, playground equipment, an ball field.

Lorraine and Worth Undertake Court Study

On May 18 the town boards from Lorraine and Worth held a joint board meeting to discuss the possibility of conducting a study of their justice courts. The NYS Uniform Justice Court Act Section 106b authorizes multiple municipalities to elect a single justice to preside in justice courts of two or more adjacent towns in the same county. The beginning of this process is for both town boards to pass a resolution to authorize a study of the feasibility of the idea. The Towns of Lorraine and Worth have passed such a resolution at the meeting on May 18. The Tug Hill Commission will be undertaking a study of the two justice courts for the towns, the purpose of which is to help the towns determine if they wish to go forward with a consolidation of their justice courts. Once the study is completed, public hearings are held and then the two towns will decide whether they wish to request that the state legislature to consolidate their justice courts. Once the consolidation is approved by the state legislature, a single justice will be elected to preside over the two courts by the voters of both towns every four years. There is already one functioning consolidated court in the Cooperative Tug Hill Council region in Harrisburg, Montague and Pinckney, which is working well for the towns involved. If anyone would like more in depth information on the court consolidation process contact CTHC Circuit Rider Angie Kimball at angela@tughill.org or 480-6857, or contact the Tug Hill Commission directly at (888) 785-2380. We look forward to working with Lorraine and Worth on this process.

Biomass District Heating Analysis for Eight Tug Hill Villages

Aaron Hendricks, who just completed his master's degree at SUNY-ESF, recently completed his master's thesis which looked at the economics of Biomass District Heating (BDH) systems in ten communities in the Tug Hill Region (Barneveld, Camden, Castorland, Cleveland, Copenhagen, Holland Patent, Parish, Prospect, Remsen, and Sylvan Beach). He presented his findings to the Tug Hill Commission at their June 22nd board meeting in Camden.

The research results revealed:

- Eight villages could deliver heat through BDH below the 2013 price of heating oil;
- 80% of the annual cost of BDH was attributable to capital expenses illustrating the importance of defining the heating district;
- Approximately \$500,000 per year would be saved on heating expenses across the ten study villages, representing 11-32% of the annual assets available across the villages. These savings will vary with erratic heating oil prices.
- The construction and operation of the BDH networks would generate \$18.7 million in additional economic activity, \$5.8 million in labor income, and 143 jobs in economic impacts within the 3 county area encompassing the Tug Hill over the next 20 years.

A one page summary of his thesis, as well as his presentation to the Commission, can be found at <http://www.tughill.org/2015/06/23/biomass-district-heating-analysis-for-eight-tug-hill-villages/>.

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Tug Hill Sage Remembered

The commission is sad to share the news that another Tug Hill Sage has passed. Bonnie Colton, 83, died peacefully at home in her sleep, on Friday, June 26, 2015. Bonnie and her husband Don (who died in December 2014) were the original founders of THRIFT (Tug Hill Resources Investment for Tomorrow). They had a great interest in Tug Hill and worked tirelessly to get others interested in the region as well. To see Bonnie's complete obituary, go to: <http://www.wwnytv.com/community/obituaries/Bonnie-Colton-83-of-Lowville-310276011.html>.



CTHC Executive Committee Meets

The executive committee of the Cooperative Tug Hill Council met June 30 at the Town Hall in Leyden. Newly elected CTHC Director Paulette Skinner, from Boylston, was welcomed to her first executive committee meeting. Following reading and approval of the minutes and the financial reports, the committee heard updates on projects they are working on with the assistance of the Tug Hill Commission and also discussed an upcoming effort to survey internet access in three of our CTHC towns. The survey of residences and businesses in Turin, Rodman and Harrisburg will try to highlight areas in which internet access is limited or non-existent in preparation for a possible grant application toward the Broadband Initiative money Governor Cuomo included in this year's budget. The committee members extended their good wishes to Commission Executive Director John Bartow on his retirement from state service and wished him good luck on his future endeavors. The committee set a tentative date of September 17 for the annual fall meeting and dinner, so please mark your calendars. Details on location, costs and time will follow as soon as they are finalized. The committee members also discussed several other administrative matters prior to adjourning. Thank you to our towns for their continued support and hope to see you in September!

Town of Wilna to Review Energy Options

The Barton & Loguidice (B&L) Engineering Firm will review and discuss recommendations outlined in the Flex Tech Assessment Report with board members at the Town of Wilna meeting on July 13 at 7:00 p.m. Information outlined in the final assessment report will assist and guide local officials in identifying options/opportunities to reduce energy consumption at the administrative office.

Funded & approved by the New York State Energy Research & Design Agency (NYSERDA), the assessment report evaluates the cost/benefit of upgrading the aging cooling and natural gas roof top heating system with a high energy equipment, installation of an occupancy controller and unoccupied setback.

Open Meetings Law Videos Available on YouTube

Bob Freeman, New York's expert on the Open Meetings Law, is highlighted in a series of videos on YouTube. Separated into video clips each shorter than 5 minutes, Bob covers topics from Email Communications and Executive Session, to the Freedom of Information Law and Enforcement and Attorney Fees. Visit the NYS Department of State's website at <http://www.dos.ny.gov/video/coog.html> for more information.