

November 4, 2011

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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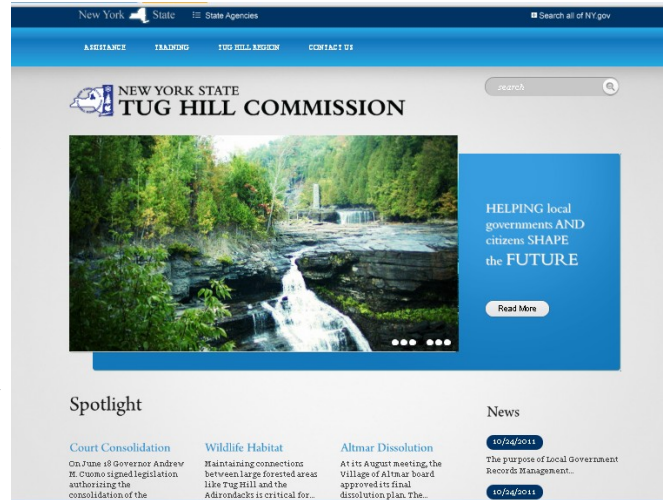
Please visit our website:
www.tughill.org



Tug Hill Commission Launches New and Improved Website

The NYS Tug Hill Commission is pleased to announce the launch of its newly revamped website at www.tughill.org!

Please visit our site to experience our new look and feel. Minor tweaks and reorganization will be ongoing, but we are excited about this new venture that that will allow us to better stay in touch with our communities and to provide information about projects, programs, events and training in a more modern and efficient way.



“Property Taxes on Tug Hill” Report Released

The Commission has just released a report titled *Property Taxes on Tug Hill*. It is available on the web at <http://www.tughill.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/Taxes-Report-Final.pdf>. The focus of the report is the costs of local services and their impacts on the tax burden of Tug Hill residents. In particular, the study summarizes the issues surrounding increasing real property tax levies and provides preliminary expenditure trend analysis among various units of government and taxing jurisdictions in the Tug Hill Region. Several case studies are used to demonstrate how rural communities differ from urban and suburban communities, and from each other, in their funding and expenditure practices. Rising property tax levies are of particular concern to local governments given New York State’s new real property tax levy cap regulations.

Property tax levies were studied for the years between 1998 and 2008 for all Tug Hill Counties, school districts, Towns and Villages. Levies increased for each of these taxing jurisdictions during this period, but did not necessarily increase each year and did not increase at a steady rate. Counties have, by far, the highest property tax levies followed by school districts, Towns and Villages. During this period, the average Tug Hill County tax levy increased 1.6% annually, the average Tug Hill school district tax levy increased 2.3% annually, the average Tug Hill Town tax levy increased 4.7%, and the average Tug Hill Village tax levy increased 3.6%.

Chamber of Commerce Meeting November 29th in Parish

The Greater Parish Area Chamber of Commerce has invited John Bartow and Katie Malinowski to their annual meeting on Tuesday, November 29 to present on the 2009 Tug Hill Landowners and Residents Survey, as well as recent work being undertaken as part of the Parish Elementary Adaptive Reuse Plan.

More information about the organization can be found at their website at: <http://parishchamberofcommerce.parish-ny.com/>.



Commission Staff Help Communities Submit CFAs for Park Projects

The Town of Martinsburg submitted a Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) for consideration under the Office of Parks and Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) program for matching State investment for improvements to Whitaker Falls Park. The improvements include leveling, marking, and signage of 1 ¾ to 2 miles of existing hiking trail system within the park. The project will improve trail safety and consistency, but remain a natural hiking trail.

The project also includes creation of six low-maintenance trail rest stops and overlook-areas that take advantage of the most scenic vistas. The scenic rest spots will include a bench, trash receptacle, and—depending upon the specific location—fencing or low profile guide rails. The project will also expand an existing gravel parking area where the trail head is located, trail marking, signage, a trail head information and sign-in kiosk, and the design and printing of trail map brochures. The total project cost is estimated at \$93,386, \$46,693 of which is local cash match, in-kind materials, labor, and use of equipment.

The Town of Wilna submitted a CFA through the OPRHP program to acquire property and plan development of a recreation park in the hamlet of Natural Bridge. The proposed \$60,000 project advances local grassroots, regional and statewide efforts to create a more walkable community to promote healthier lifestyles while enhancing opportunities to attract sustainable development through the tourism industry.

(Continued on page 4)

Lewis County Economic Development Conference a Success!

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Nearly 100 participants attended the second Lewis County Economic Development Conference last week, to hear about success stories as well as upcoming opportunities and challenges in agriculture, tourism, and infrastructure. In the tourism session, representatives from Lyons Falls outlined how they have begun to turn the Village around over the past 5 years and what they see for the future, including redevelopment of the Lyons Falls Pulp and Paper mill (now owned by the Lewis County Development Corporation), completion of their Brownfield Opportunity Area program, and growing the tourism industry to support businesses like The Edge Hotel and Boondocks. Sue Maring from Tug Hill Vineyard shared her story of starting a business from the ground up, and the obstacles that she and her husband had to overcome and what they see in their future plans.

The keynote speaker for the day was Patrick Hooker from Empire State Development Corporation (and former State Agriculture Commissioner) who spoke about opportunities for economic development in Lewis County related to agriculture and forest products.

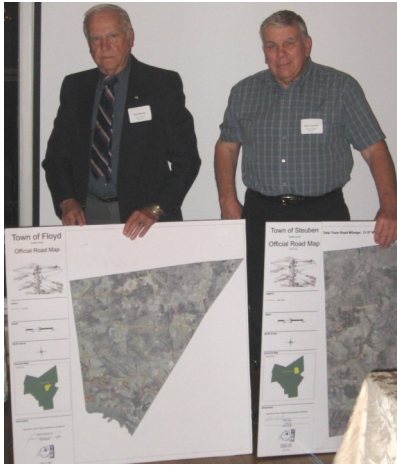
Central New York REDC Holds Public Forum at SUNY Oswego

The Central New York Regional Economic Development Council (CNYREDC) held a public forum at SUNY Oswego on Thursday, October 20, 2011, which attracted several dozen citizens, including Salmon Rivers Council of Governments chairman Leon Heagle, to comment on major priorities on strengthening the Central New York economy and how to better reach and engage citizens in the economic development process. Oswego County is one of five counties in the CNYREDC region, which also includes Cayuga, Cortland, Madison and Onondaga counties. The CNYREDC is charged with developing a regional economic development strategy by November 14, 2011.

More information about the CNYREDC, including its vision statement, draft strategic overview, and summary notes for public forum #2 at SUNY Oswego, can be found on the Internet at <http://nyworks.ny.gov/content/central-new-york>.

Northern Oneida County Council of Government's 29th Annual Meeting

Over 100 local, county and state officials attended NOCCOG's 29th Annual Meeting and Dinner at the Delta Lake Inn on Thursday, October 27th. Vice-Chairman Arnie Talgo, in the absence of Chairman Bob Sauer, delivered the annual report. The renewal of the inter-municipal agreement (IMA) between NOCCOG and the 19 towns and villages was voted on and accepted.



NOCCOG Executive Board members were elected for 2012: John Doiron (Ava), Chairman; Arnie Talgo (Steuben), Vice Chair; Mark Scheidelman (Trenton), Fiscal Officer; and, Bob Sauer (Camden) and Mark Trnchik (Annsville) as Directors.

The 2012 annual budget was explained in detail by Mr. Scheidelman and was adopted. Annual dues were increased from \$550 to \$1,000 for 2012 by a unanimous roll call vote of the chief elected official from each municipality or their designee.

Tug Hill Commission GIS Specialist Mickey Dietrich gave a presentation on asset management and the important role GIS plays in the process of collecting highway-related information. Laminated and mounted copies of official road maps for the towns of Camden, Floyd and Steuben were presented to local officials from those communities. The NOCCOG Executive Board and staff greatly appreciate the continued support from its municipal partners.



NOCCOG circuit rider Gerry Ritter will be visiting supervisors and mayors in the next few weeks that were not able to attend the meeting to ask them to sign the renewal of the IMA.

Altmar to Hold Village Dissolution Referendum

The village of Altmar will hold a referendum on Tuesday, December 6, 2011, from noon until 9:00 p.m. After the village board's adoption of a dissolution plan in August, the public had the opportunity to petition the village board to hold a referendum to ask the question, "The voters of the village of Altmar having previously voted to dissolve, shall the elector initiated dissolution plan take effect?" The village received such a petition and has scheduled its referendum in accordance with Article 17-A of New York State General Municipal Law.

More information about the village of Altmar dissolution process, including the dissolution study itself, can be found at www.cgr.org/altmar/.

**Daylight savings time end st
2:00 am on Sunday November 6, 2011!
Remember to "fall back" and
set your clocks back one hour!!**

North Shore, Salmon Rivers Councils of Governments to Host ZBA Training

The North Shore and Salmon Rivers Councils of Governments will host a training session on ZBA basics, to be conducted by Tug Hill Commission Director of Planning Philip Street. This training session will be held at the **Parish Village Gym, 2938 East Main Street, Parish, New York on Monday, November 21, 2011 from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm.**

This two hour training session is intended to provide an overview of how zoning boards of appeal operate in New York State. The intended audience is ZBA members, planning board members, and other municipal officials who wish to gain a better understanding of ZBA powers and duties, and the zoning appeals process.

Preregistration is requested for this training opportunity to make sure that there are adequate quantities of any handouts and meeting materials. Please pre-register by calling the Tug Hill Commission offices at its toll-free number, 888-785-2380. This session is good for two hours credit for planning board and ZBA members needing training hours.

**NYS Tug Hill
Commission**

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Thank you!

SAVE THE DATE!

The NYS Tug Hill Commission's
23rd Annual
Local Government Conference
will take place
Thursday March 29, 2012
at
Jefferson Community College

**Municipalities No Longer Eligible for
NYSERDA Energy Audit Program**

Effective December 31, 2011, municipalities will no longer be eligible to participate in the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) Energy Audit Program. The Audit Program provides a low cost alternative for municipalities with an average electric demand under 100kW. For \$100 to \$400 per building (depending upon the number of employees per building), municipalities receive a high quality summary to help you to manage energy use through economically feasible improvement projects.

If you have been considering an energy audit, or intend to have audits completed in 2012, **act now** while the Energy Audit Program may still provide your municipality with financial assistance. As of January 1, 2012, municipalities may participate in the NYSERDA FlexTech program to obtain energy audit services. The FlexTech program requires a 50/50 cost share.

More information about the Energy Audit Program is available here: <http://nyserda.ny.gov/en/Page-Sections/Commercial-and-Industrial/Programs/FlexTech-Program/Energy-Audit-Program.aspx>. More information about the FlexTech Program is available here: <http://nyserda.ny.gov/Page-Sections/Commercial-and-Industrial/Programs/FlexTech-Program.aspx>.

If you have any questions or would like to take advantage of the Energy Audit Program, contact Ann Heidenreich at (877) 717-6841 or region2POC@nyserda.org. **Municipal applications for the Energy Audit Program must be completed and submitted by December 31 to be eligible – don't delay!**



("CFAs Submitted for Parks Projects" Continued from page 2)

Located along the Olympic Scenic Byway on NYS Rt. 3 and a gateway to the Adirondacks, local officials are advancing efforts to acquire 6 acres of open space and vacant residential property in the rural hamlet. Local residents, officials and business owners will document a shared community vision to guide future development.

The Village of Copenhagen also applied for \$75,000 through the OPRHP program to acquire vacant commercial property to provide public access to publicly owned waterfront property along the Deer River. The proposed project will include the construction of an open air pavilion/gazebo, scenic overlook, pedestrian walkway/s and energy efficient lighting. Located in the village retail center and serving as a destination to residents and visitors, the park will interconnect to existing motorized and non-motorized trails.