



May 20, 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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## Governor and SAGE Commission Announce Website



In February, Governor Cuomo created the Spending and Government Efficiency (SAGE) Commission and, just recently, announced its website at <http://www.governor.ny.gov/sage>. This team of business leaders, management experts, and academics has the charge of helping streamline the government and save taxpayers' money. *MORE IMPORTANTLY*, at this website, **YOU**, the citizens of the Tug Hill Region, have the opportunity to provide the SAGE Commission with comments and feedback about **YOUR** ideas regarding the streamlining of state government. The Governor is inviting all citizens to help modernize and "right size" state government and your participation is to be an integral component to the reform process. The site also lists the SAGE Commission's public meetings and materials from its first meeting on April 25th. The SAGE Commission is to submit final recommendations to the governor by June 1, 2012, with periodic progress reports expected throughout the process. Don't let this opportunity to speak out pass you by!

## Commission Provides Input at 2012 Farm Bill Work Group

Commission staffer Katie Malinowski attended a recent workgroup, organized by NYS Ag & Markets Commissioner Darrel Aubertine, to generate feedback on various elements of the upcoming Farm Bill. The Farm Bill is negotiated every six years and has several programs that impact rural areas like Tug Hill. Commission comments included emphasizing the importance of USDA community facilities funding for sewer and water infrastructure in rural communities; funding for forest programs such as Forest Legacy that help private land conservation and landowner outreach and education; and energy programs that promote the use of alternative energies, particularly woody biomass and digesters, to help offset heating and electric costs and promote economic development in working landscapes like Tug Hill.

## Black River Watershed Conference Reminder!

Please remember to sign up now for the First Annual Black River Watershed Conference in Croghan on June 8th. Please visit <http://tughill.org/WorkshopFliers/Black%20River%20Watershed%20Conference.pdf> to download a copy of the registration sheet and for more information about the presentations being offered. The cost for the conference is only \$10 per person. Hope to see you there!





### Useful Websites for Agriculture and Local Foods

#### [NYAgTrader.org](http://NYAgTrader.org):

Free posting of farm materials you have or need (for example: manure, equipment, livestock, tools, hay, compost). Connects buyers and sellers to negotiate directly.

#### [NYFoodTrader.org](http://NYFoodTrader.org):

Free posting of farm products you have or need (for example: fruits, vegetables, meat dairy, maple products, jams). Supports the locally grown food movement.

## Fields Pond Foundation

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### Grants for Trailmaking, Public Access to Natural Resources

The Fields Pond Foundation provides financial assistance to municipal government agencies and conservation organizations that increase environmental awareness by involving local residents in conservation issues. The priorities of the Fields Pond Foundation are:

1. Project grants for trailmaking and other enhancement of public access to conservation lands, rivers, coastlines and other natural resources;
2. Land acquisition for conservation;
3. Assistance in establishment of endowments as a means of funding stewardship of conservation areas; and
4. Related education programs and publications.

Requests can be from \$500 to \$25,000, with most falling within the range of \$2,000 to \$10,000. The Foundation is willing to consider multiple-year grants. Applications are accepted year-round. For more information, see their website at <http://fieldspond.org/about.htm>.

Interested in learning about how frequently you should clean out your septic system?  
[Go to http://www.inspectapedia.com/septic/tankpump.htm](http://www.inspectapedia.com/septic/tankpump.htm)

### Altmar Village Dissolution Study Committee Holds Public Information Meeting

The Altmar Village Dissolution Study Committee held its first public information meeting on Wednesday, May 11, at Altmar Elementary School. More than two dozen Village residents attended.

Charles Zettek Jr. of the Center for Governmental Research presented the preliminary findings of the study committee, which is made up of representatives of the Village, the Town, the Village fire company and the local business community. The Center for Governmental Research is the independent group hired by the Village to assist in the dissolution study process.

The study committee operated under the assumption that the desired outcome was less government and less expensive government. Under those assumptions, the committee found that through a reduction of government officials and government services, Village taxpayers would see an overall reduction in taxes through Village dissolution, while Town taxpayers outside the Village would see a small increase in taxes. The state currently offers local aid incentives to communities which consolidate, and with those incentives factored in, both Village and Town taxpayers would see a decrease in taxes.

After the presentation by CGR, attendees asked a broad range of questions about

*(Continued on page 4)*



## A Primer on Right-of-Way, Boundary Issues, and Legal Aspects of Public Highways

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On **June 29, 2011** from **1:00 to 5:00 pm** at the **SUNY IT, MARCY CAMPUS (Kunsela Hall Café)**

This training is being sponsored by the NYS Tug Hill Commission, SUNYIT Institute for Local Government & the Local Government Education Committee. The presenter will be Ken Ayers, Esq., of the Ayers Law Firm, PLLC. This session will examine current and developing legal issues with a focus on a municipality's responsibility with respect to its highways. Topics covered will include:

- Road acquisition
- Nature & extent of legal interest in roads (title vs. easement)
- Streets by prescription (use)
- Abandonment by non-use and discontinuance
- Minimum maintenance of public highways
- Seasonal limited use roads
- Official maps
- Subdivision streets & paper streets
- Regulation & maintenance of public highways & rights-of-way



**Who Should Attend?** Mayors, Supervisors, Councilpersons, Trustees, Highway Superintendents, Planning & Zoning Board, Town Attorneys, Town & Village Clerks. There is a \$15.00 fee for the workshop. Please visit the Tug Hill Commission Website at [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org) to get a registration sheet. Payment is due by June 22, 2011 to:

Continuing Professional Education  
LGEC Registration  
SUNYIT, 100 Seymour Road  
Utica, NY 13502  
Phone: 315-792-7270  
Fax: 315-792-7278

## DEC Accepting Applications For Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant Funding



This grant makes funds available to rural fire companies for the purchase of equipment such as portable backpack pumps, Nomex protective clothing, hand tools, hardhats, hose, portable radios and dry hydrants. Only expenses directly related to fire suppression efforts are eligible for funding. The grant is a 50/50 matching funds program and applications must be received by June 15, 2011.

Eligible fire companies include those that serve a single town with a population of 10,000 or less and those that serve multiple communities, one of which is a rural town of less than 10,000 residents. The DEC anticipates receiving an appropriation of more than \$350,000 for the 2011 federal fiscal year, which is a slight decrease from 2010. All funded projects should be completed by October 31, 2011.

Preference will be given to fire departments who have not received funding in the past five years under the Volunteer Fire Assistance/Rural Community Fire Protection Program. For applications or further information about the grant program, contact DEC at (518) 402-8839, or visit: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/2364.html>. The Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant program is made possible by the Federal Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978.



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**Thank you!**

### ***(Altmar Village Dissolution Study Committee Holds Public Information Meeting, Continued from page 2)***

the future of the fire department, current and future services including street lighting, water and sewer, the cemetery, and the role of the Town during a transition period and afterward.

A meeting has been scheduled for Monday, May 23 for the Village dissolution study committee to present the draft study to the Village board for its consideration. The Village has until the end of the month to adopt the draft. After the Village board has adopted the draft, they will schedule and conduct a formal public hearing on the proposal.

More information about the Village dissolution study and process are available on the Village's web site, [www.villageofaltmar-ny.us](http://www.villageofaltmar-ny.us), and on CGR's web site, [www.cgr.org/altmar](http://www.cgr.org/altmar).



## **GLRI Grants—No Match Required**

You are invited to provide proposals for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). There is a great deal of detail about these opportunities, too much to print, so if you have any ideas that fit the categories listed below, please contact Karen Engel at the NYS DEC at (518) 402-9517 or [kmengel@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:kmengel@gw.dec.state.ny.us). Applications are due July 15, 2011. **Program Areas Include:**

Restore Urban and Community Forests - Utilize existing management plans and tree cover assessment tools to target tree planting activities to improve ecosystem and stream health, and restore wildlife habitat.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) - Forest Habitat Restoration in areas impacted by EAB.

Reduce Toxic Substances in Brownfield Sites - Utilize the planting of trees and vegetation to take up or trap contaminants and reduce storm-water runoff.

Payments for Ecosystem Services - Encourage voluntary actions, including the use of green infrastructure, that results in carbon storage, water, and/or biodiversity benefits and will, in turn, **compensate private individuals and entities for exceptional land stewardship that provides public benefits.** Green infrastructure may include trees, tree boxes, reforestation, cisterns, rain barrels, downspout disconnection, green roofs, roof gardens, contained planters, vegetated swales, rain gardens/vegetated infiltration basins, flow-through planters, infiltration planters, and soakage trenches.