



January 3, 2020

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Planning for Solar Energy Development on Tug Hill

On November 15th and December 13th, Tug Hill Commission staff met with partners from the Cornell Cooperative Extension offices, county planning departments, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, and economic development agencies in all four Tug Hill counties (Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida and Oswego) as well as the Development Authority of the North Country, to discuss how best to plan for solar energy development in the four county area. The discussions began with an overview of the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (Climate Act) and the goals that are identified within, such as adopting measures to put the state on a path to reduce statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 85% by 2050 and net zero emissions in all sectors of the economy. Specifically, the Climate Act aims to achieve 6 GW of distributed solar energy capacity installed in the state by 2025 and 3 GW of statewide energy storage capacity by 2030.

Four main issues were discussed in the meetings. First, there was general agreement that tracking solar projects – built and proposed at small (i.e. 5 MW and below) and large scales (i.e. 20 MW and above) – would be a good first step to identify priority communities that might need technical assistance for current and future solar energy development. Similarly, working groups were created to identify the likely sites for solar projects based on industry standards. Once the analyses are complete, the final results will be presented to city, town, and village boards to inform their decision-making processes.

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The Tug Hill Commission will meet Monday, January 27 at 10:00 a.m. at Amboy town hall, 822 State Route 69, Amboy. The public is welcome to attend.

Community Choice Aggregation Workshop January 21

The River Area Council of Governments, along with the NYS Tug Hill Commission, will hold a Community Choice Aggregation workshop on January 21, 2020 at the village of West Carthage community room (61 High Street, Carthage, NY 13619). It will be from 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm and any community interested in learning more about community choice aggregation is welcome to come.

The workshop will be a panel discussion involving presenters from Good Energy, Joules Assets, MEGA, and the New York Power Authority. You will have the opportunity to ask questions throughout the presentation. Briefly, community choice aggregation allows participating local governments to procure energy supply service and distributed energy resources for eligible customers in the community.

This workshop is free. Pre-registration is requested. Contact Mickey Dietrich at mickey@tughill.org or at (315) 681-5023.

Planning for Solar Energy (cont. on page 1)

The second topic of discussion centered on finding tools that could be used for land use planning in communities. Several templates for local solar laws, and language for comprehensive plans, were shared with the group. These templates as well as best management practices will be included in an issue paper that the Tug Hill Commission is currently writing. Also, the county referral process and the State Environmental Quality Review Act were discussed as opportunities to review applications.

Thirdly, the impact of solar energy projects on agriculture was discussed. Project review and approval is completed by the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets under Agriculture and Markets Law §305(4) when there is an exercise of eminent domain and other public acquisitions, and on the advance of public funds. The impact on agricultural assessments, diversification of agricultural and farming activities, and potential strategies for working with farmers were also mentioned in this discussion period.

Lastly, the economic impacts on communities, primarily through PILOT negotiations and impact on taxing jurisdictions, was brought up for discussion. Ensuring that solar energy projects will be decommissioned correctly and at no cost to the landowner or municipality was deemed important. A template for solar project decommissioning will also be included in the Commission's issue paper along with a list of useful links to more resources.

Other miscellaneous topics came up throughout the discussions, including battery storage, transmission capacity, upgrades to substations, and the impact of solar energy development on property values. A follow-up meeting was held on December 17th with the representatives from Jefferson and Lewis Counties and a third meeting is scheduled for January 23rd. A follow-up meeting is being planned for January 2020 with representatives from Oneida and Oswego Counties.

For more information or if you wish to provide any additional information as we write the issue paper, please call the Tug Hill Commission or email katie@tughill.org, matt@tughill.org, and alaina@tughill.org.

Disaster Declaration for 18 Counties for Halloween Storm

A major disaster declaration was issued on December 20 by the federal government for the 18 counties that sustained damages during the severe storms and flash flooding October 31 and November 1, 2019. With this declaration, FEMA validated state and local government estimates that more than \$33 million in response costs and infrastructure damage was incurred following the storms. This approval is the next step toward gaining financial assistance from the federal government to allow local communities to continue to recover and rebuild. Through FEMA's Public Assistance program, reimbursement can be received for activities such as debris removal, emergency protective measures and the repairing and rebuilding of publicly-owned infrastructure, including roads, public schools, bridges, parks, hospitals, police stations, fire houses, water and waste water treatment facilities and other public facilities.

The 18 counties included in the declaration are Chautauqua, Chenango, Cortland, Erie, Essex, Fulton, Hamilton, Herkimer, **Jefferson, Lewis**, Madison, Montgomery, **Oneida, Oswego**, Otsego, Saratoga, Tioga and Warren Counties.

With the issuance of the federal disaster declaration, the State's Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services will work with local partners to identify recovery projects to apply for reimbursement through the Public Assistance program. FEMA will then review the projects for eligibility and conduct site visits with the Division and local officials to scope and combine projects, as appropriate. Once a project is identified and the initial site visit has been conducted, FEMA, Division staff and the locality will develop the Project Worksheet, which includes a damage description, scope of work and cost estimate. Following a final FEMA eligibility review, funding will be obligated to the project. (The above information was taken from <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-announces-federal-approval-major-disaster-declaration-severe-october-31-storm>.)

Communities should reach out to their county emergency management office as the first point of contact. Applicant briefings will be announced soon.

2020 Local Government Conference Registration Live

Registration and session information for the March 26, 2020 Local Government Conference (LGC) is now available on our website. If you would like to get a jump start on your 2020 LGC planning, please visit <https://www.tughill.org/services/training/local-government-conference/>. You will find everything you need including session topics and registration information. ALSO, please watch your mailboxes, as the registration and session information will be mailed out by the first of the year. There are options for on-line and in the mail registration, and we have kept our regular registration rate low at \$50 if post-marked by March 6.

Registration starts at 7:30 am, and the day kicks off with a short keynote at 8:30 am, followed by four separate sessions throughout the day and lunch in the gymnasium. At 4:00 pm, everyone is invited to a reception for an opportunity to catch up with friends and colleagues before you head home!

Each of the four sessions will include seven individual presentations for you to choose from. Our goal is to include a variety of subjects in each session that would be useful for a variety of local officials including highway staff, clerks, town and village board, planning board, and zoning board of appeal members and assessors.

Session one topics include: *Employee Handbook Basics, All About Grant Preparedness, Site Plan and Subdivision Review, Spot Zoning, Right-sizing Culverts, Vital Records and The Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act.*

Session two topics include: *Reserve Funds and Long-Term Planning, Cyber Threat Mitigation, Historic Preservation, Transparency in Planning Proceedings, Municipal Rights of Way, Your Role in a Disaster, and PILOTs for Renewable Energy.*

Session three topics include: *The EMS Crisis and Its Impact on Municipal Budgets, Small Wireless Facilities and 5G in New York State, Translating Comprehensive Plans in the Face of Live Projects, Land Use and SEQR Case Law Update, Selecting Pavement Preservation Techniques, and Climate Smart Communities.*

Session four topics include: *Social Media and the First Amendment, River Restoration and Resiliency, Ethical Considerations for Planning Boards and Zoning Boards of Appeal, Q&A for Planning and Zoning Boards, Myths of Traffic Calming and Complete Streets, Email Essentials and Siting Utility Scale Solar Projects.*

Assessor's Session: If you are an assessor, you are invited to take part in six hours of certified training broken into a three-hour morning session on *Preparing for an Audit* and a three-hour afternoon session on *Trending Assessments*.

We hope you will enjoy the lineup of sessions we have in store for you. In large part, we rely on your after-conference survey feedback to create the agenda for the following year's conference. Thank you for all the ideas and comments!

The screenshot shows the Eventbrite page for the NYS Tug Hill Commission. The main heading is "NYS Tug Hill Commission". Below it, there are tabs for "Live Events 1" and "Past Events 3". The featured event is "31st Annual NYS Tug Hill Commission Local Government Conference" on Thursday, March 26 at 7:30 AM. The location is Jefferson Community College, Watertown. The price range is \$50 - \$1,500. There are social media icons for Facebook and Twitter. A social media feed on the right shows a post from the NYS Tug Hill Commission highlighting a resource from NY360.COM about snow shopping in Lowville. The footer contains navigation links for using Eventbrite, planning events, finding events, and connecting with the organizer.

Erosion and Sediment Control Training March 25

The Jefferson County Soil & Water Conservation District is hosting a four hour NYS Department of Environmental Conservation endorsed training on Wednesday, March 25 from noon to 4 pm. The cost is \$80 per person, which includes one Blue-Book Lite and pizza for lunch.

Under the NYS DEC's Stormwater Permit, all developers, contractors and subcontractors must identify at least one trained contractor from their company that will be responsible for implementation of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), and have at least one trained contractor on site on a daily basis when soil disturbance activities are being performed.

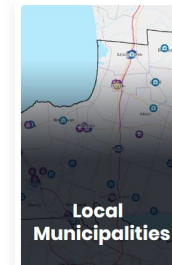
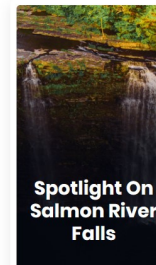
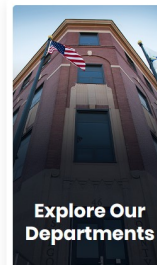
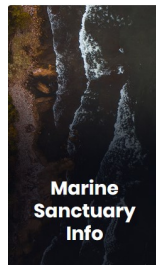
For more information, including printable registration form and online registration, see <https://jeffersoncountyswcd.org/>.

Salmon River Falls Featured on Oswego County Web Site

Oswego County has updated its web site (www.oswegocounty.com), and featured on the current version of the redesign is a "Spotlight on Salmon River Falls." The link there leads to the Oswego County Tourism YouTube channel, and a video, about a minute in length, about the Salmon River Falls, including drone footage of a perspective of the falls you may never have seen before.

The Oswego County Tourism YouTube channel featuring this and other noteworthy material from the county can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/user/OswegoCountyTourism/>.

CURRENT INITIATIVES



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To request our newsletter electronically please email gwen@tughill.org or call 1-888-785-2380.

For upcoming trainings, grant deadlines, and meetings, view our [calendar](#).

New York State Archives 2020 Winter Webinar Series

The New York State Archives is offering the following webinars - each webinar below will begin at 10:00 a.m. and run for an hour. Click on the webinar name below for specifics or to register:

Jan. 15 - [*Introduction to Electronic Records Management*](#)

Jan. 29 - [*Inventorizing Your Electronic Records*](#)

Feb. 12 - [*Managing Social Media Records*](#)

Feb. 26 - [*Digital Imaging*](#)

March 11 - [*Email Essentials*](#)

Check here to see other training opportunities [NYS Archives workshop registration page](#).