

March 13, 2020

## In-Person Local Government Conference Cancelled; On-line Webinars Under Development

Given the most recent guidance from NYS and the CDC regarding COVID-19 (coronavirus), the Tug Hill Commission has cancelled the annual Tug Hill Local Government Conference scheduled for Thursday, March 26. Registered attendees, exhibitors and speakers should have already received email messages from someone at the commission with information.

We are working with our speakers to offer at least some of the scheduled sessions via webinar. While not ideal, we know many of you depend on the LGC training to meet your four-hour planning and zoning board training requirement. This year's schedule was exceptional with many hot topics being addressed, and we want you to have this information in hand sooner rather than later. Please watch your email for more information over the next week, as well as our website, [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org), and Facebook page.

We hope you, your families, and your communities stay healthy and that this situation resolves quickly. We will miss seeing you on March 26, but know that we are only a phone call or email away. Please reach out to us at (315) 785-2380 if you have any questions.

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**Tug Hill Commission March 25 Watertown Meeting Cancelled.**  
The next scheduled Tug Hill Commission meeting is Monday, April 20 at 10 am at the Forestport Town Hall, Forestport.

## COVID-19 Resources for Local Governments

With the prevalence of COVID-19 still on the increase, and more and more information becoming available about the virus and its effects, local governments may be faced with making decisions about how to conduct necessary business. The following compilation may be a useful list for news and resources to consult in local decision making. Keep in mind this is a rapidly evolving situation, so check back frequently.

World Health Organization – Coronavirus Disease Outbreak: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/>

United Nations page on COVID-19: <https://hr.un.org/page/coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Coronavirus Disease 2019: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

NYS Department of Health – Novel Coronavirus: <https://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/coronavirus/>

Preventing COVID-19 Spread in Communities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>

Jefferson County Health Department: <https://co.jefferson.ny.us/departments/PublicHealth>

Lewis County Health Department: <https://www.lewiscounty.org/departments/public-health/public-health>

Oneida County Health Department: <https://ocgov.net/oneida/health>

Oswego County Health Department: <https://health.oswegocounty.com/>

Governor Cuomo has declared a Disaster Emergency in the State of New York ([www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-202-declaring-disaster-emergency-state-new-york](http://www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-202-declaring-disaster-emergency-state-new-york)), and has announced that the state will be producing and distributing hand sanitizer ([www.governor.ny.gov/news/novel-coronavirus-briefing-governor-cuomo-announces-state-will-provide-alcohol-based-hand](http://www.governor.ny.gov/news/novel-coronavirus-briefing-governor-cuomo-announces-state-will-provide-alcohol-based-hand)): Local governments seeking to obtain additional stocks of hand sanitizer should work with their County's Emergency Manager and local Health Department to submit requests directly into NY Responds, the state's web-based system which enables both local governments and state agencies to submit and share vital emergency-related information and resource requests.



## USA Today Covers Latest Lake Effect Storm

Commissioner Leona Cheresnoski was highlighted in a recent article by USA Today, along with Dave Kowell from the Osceola Snowmobile Association and North Redfield National Weather Service weather observer Carol Yerdon. Read the full article at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2020/03/03/tug-hill-winter-snow-storm-osceola-redfield-old-lards-barn-bed-and-breakfast/4895346002/?fbclid=IwAR0oisXk0HBRjbpqox5VpgeyEWxwWsjYVgPWIBGRUOLXRgoxBGPFwvXlRk>

## NYSERDA Announces 2019 Large-Scale Renewable Awards

State and local officials met in the town of Manheim, Herkimer County on March 13 to announce the latest awards from NYSERDA's Large-Scale Renewable program. Included with the 17 solar projects, including two with energy storage, and four wind projects were two solar projects in the Tug Hill region: Greens Corners Solar, 120 MW in the towns of Hounsfield and Watertown, and Sandy Creek Solar, 19.99 MW in the towns of Adams and Ellisburg.



From left: Doreen Harris, NYSERDA; Assemblyman Robert Smullen; John Haughton, town of Manheim Supervisor; Alicia Barton, NYSERDA; John Piseck, Herkimer County IDA; SunEast Solar representative.

## 2020 Census Postcards in the Mail

From the 2020Census.gov website:

**March 12 - 20:** Households began receiving official Census Bureau mail with detailed information on how to respond to the 2020 Census online, by phone, or by mail.

**March 30 - April 1:** The Census Bureau will count people who are experiencing homelessness over these three days. As part of this process, the Census Bureau counts people in shelters, at soup kitchens and mobile food vans, on the streets, and at non-sheltered, outdoor locations such as tent encampments.

**April 1:** Census Day is observed nationwide. When you respond to the census, you will tell the Census Bureau where you live as of April 1, 2020.

**April:** Census takers will begin visiting college students who live on campus, people living in senior centers, and others who live among large groups of people. Census takers will also begin following up with households that have not yet responded in areas that include off-campus housing, where residents are not counted in groups.

**May - July:** Census takers will begin visiting homes that have not responded to the 2020 Census to help make sure everyone is counted.

**December:** The Census Bureau will deliver apportionment counts to the President and Congress as required by law.



The River Area Council of Governments will hold an economic summit on April 23, 2020 from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm at the new Zero Dock Street Restaurant located on Dock Street in Carthage, NY. The event is tailored to local government officials, businesses, and organizations within the region, but is open to anyone interested. For a look at the agenda go to <https://www.racog.org/river-area-visioning-economic-summit/>. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/riverareasummit> or contact Mickey Dietrich at (315) 681-5023, [mickey@tughill.org](mailto:mickey@tughill.org).

## Watercraft Inspectors on Salmon River and Reservoir, Oneida Lake and Delta Lake in 2020

The St. Lawrence Eastern Lake Ontario Partnership for Invasive Species Management (SLELO PRISM) is expanding its watercraft inspection program in 2020, with 10 stewards conducting inspections at more than 20 launches in the five-county area (Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Oswego and St. Lawrence). In the Tug Hill region, sites include the Salmon River, Salmon River Reservoir, Oneida Lake, and Delta Lake.

Watercraft Inspection consists of visually inspecting all boating and recreational equipment that come in contact with water; removing all visible plants, animals or mud materials; and draining any compartments that may hold water. Stewards are stationed at launches where they share educational information about aquatic invasive species. During inspections, which usually last less than three minutes, stewards collect important data on where boaters are coming from, headed to next and if they are aware of invasive species issues.

For more information, see [https://www.sleloinvasives.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2020\\_SLELO-PRISM-Winter-Newsletter.pdf](https://www.sleloinvasives.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2020_SLELO-PRISM-Winter-Newsletter.pdf).

## Floyd Holds Town Visioning Session

The town of Floyd held a visioning exercise Tuesday, March 10 at the town municipal building. Commission staff facilitated the session at which town officials and members of the public discussed what they believe to be the town's strengths and weaknesses, as well as opportunities and threats facing the community. Approximately 25 people attended the forum. The discussion was lively, much of it centering around how to attract growth and development while preserving the rural character that is the reason many choose to live in Floyd. The results of the session will be incorporated into the upcoming update of the town's comprehensive plan.



# DEC Announces Second Round of Annual Trees for Tribs “Buffer in a Bag” Initiative

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) began accepting applications for the statewide Trees for Tribs "Buffer in a Bag" application period on February 14. The initiative is designed to increase riparian buffers statewide by engaging landowners in small-scale plantings. Qualifying private and public landowners may apply for a free bag of 25 tree and shrub seedlings for planting near streams, rivers, or lakes to help stabilize banks, protect water quality, and improve wildlife habitat.

To qualify, landowners must have property in New York State with at least 50 feet that borders a stream, river, or lake, and provide photos and map coordinates of the planting location. Applicants are eligible for one bag of 25 seedlings and recipients will be chosen on a first-come, first-served basis. Previous recipients are encouraged to reapply to continue to build their riparian buffer. A total of 500 bags will be available statewide for this round of applications.

Trees for Tribs is a program of the Saratoga Tree Nursery and is supported by the State's Environmental Protection Fund (EPF).

Visit [DEC's website](#) for more information about the Buffer in a Bag application process and requirements. Applications are due by 3:00 pm on April 10, 2020. General questions about Buffer in a Bag may be directed to [treesfortribs@dec.ny.gov](mailto:treesfortribs@dec.ny.gov).

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

## Economic Development Forum in Utica

Staff attended The Genesis Group's Economic Development Forum on February 26 at Utica College. President of Mohawk Valley EDGE, Steve DiMeo gave a presentation on the details of plans for a \$1 billion semiconductor Utica factory.

Cree Inc., the North Carolina semiconductor manufacturer building a \$1 billion factory near Utica, is on track to start construction of the plant by the end of the first quarter of 2020.

The plans include:

- 454,000-square-foot fabrication building with 112,000 square feet of cleanroom space
- Connected administration building with around 85,000 square feet
- Separate 100,000-square-foot central utility building that would be connected via a bridge
- Plans for a 375-space parking lot

Over the next eight years, Cree is expected to employ at least 614 people. When the plant opens, employees will work across four shifts. The factory is scheduled to start production of its first silicon carbide wafers in January 2022. Silicon carbide chips can be used in electric vehicles, solar inverters and 5G infrastructure. There is potential to build a second clean room space. Much of the company's growth is expected to be driven by the electric vehicle market.

Oneida County's director of economic development David Catalfamo also provided an update on the "Sky Dome ~ Drone" initiative at the Griffiss Business & Technology Park. New York State is set to invest \$9 million to transform an unoccupied hangar at Griffiss International Airport. The funds will help establish "Skydome," a new indoor drone testing and research facility open throughout the year.

The facility is set to be the largest of its kind in the United States and officials hope this will allow the region to lead the industry and spur the local economy. The project comes as the Mohawk Valley continues seeing investments in drone technology. Oneida County is confident this initiative will continue economic and technological growth throughout the region. The first 50-mile stretch of the drone corridor was completed in 2019, stretching from Rome to Syracuse. Skydome is expected to be open by fall of 2020.

For more information about both of these projects, go to the Mohawk Valley EDGE website at [www.mvedge.org](http://www.mvedge.org).

