

August 13, 2021

Northern Border Regional Commission Grant to Lewis County

Lewis County will receive \$263,000 in grant funds from the [Northern Border Regional Commission](#) to provide affordable, reliable and high-speed broadband to approximately 1,173 homes and businesses covering a 10-mile radius to include the village of Copenhagen and surrounding rural communities that are currently underserved or have no access to Internet. The total project cost is \$328,816. More detailed information is available in a [Watertown Daily Times](#) article published this week.

The grant funded project implements recommendations made in a broadband [planning](#) and [analysis](#) effort Lewis County undertook in 2020. Jefferson, Oneida and Oswego Counties are currently completing similar analyses.

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New Fort Drum Intern at the Commission

Using Fort Drum's Soldier for Life internship program, Fort Drum Army Specialist Ethan Pease started his internship at the commission this week. He comes to the commission with a strong background in writing and graphic design skills. Projects he will be involved with include a Black River Historical Floating Museum, redesigning some brochures, assisting with GIS mapping, and supporting the Social Cohesion survey through the regional Civic Engagement group.

The next meeting of the Tug Hill Commission will be Monday, September 20, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the Village of Carthage offices, 120 S. Mechanic Street, Carthage. The public is welcome to attend. There is also an option to join remotely via Zoom, using us02web.zoom.us/j/82338298144 or calling 929-205-6099, meeting ID 823 3829 8144.

Albion Adopts Solar and Wind Energy Law

In the beginning of 2021, the town of Albion passed a moratorium on the development of renewable energy within the town so that the Town Board could pursue enacting local regulations. Between May 2021 and August 2021, the commission supported the town's efforts to construct a local law that addresses solar energy systems, wind energy systems, and battery energy storage systems. On August 10, 2021, the town board adopted the local law, which included feedback from the Oswego County Planning Department. If you would like a copy of the local law that was adopted, contact the town for more information. If your town is interested in adopting similar regulations, please reach out to the commission's planning staff, Matt Johnson (matt@tughill.org) or Alaina Mallette (alaina@tughill.org).

Oneida County Main Street Program Announced

County Executive Anthony J. Picente Jr. has announced a new Oneida County Main Street Program to provide support to local municipal downtown development projects, assist in the safe and efficient redesign of main streets and promote investment and business growth. The program is designed to improve safety, provide better access to local businesses, allow people to move safely on foot, accommodate bicyclists, support climate smart investments, provide a sense of place and enhance communities. While there is no singular design format for a main street project as all communities within the county are different, it is essential that each community responds to the unique needs of its residents. Each main street project should also reflect the theme and values already present in their community.

The program will have two phases: planning assistance and capital project funding. The Oneida County Planning Department will collaborate with cities, towns, and villages to rethink and rebrand their main streets including complete street designs, parking, streetscapes, façade programs, public space design and entrance way development.

A \$500,000 fund for planning assistance, with a 50-50 match between the municipalities and the county will be available to develop unique main street programs in participating communities. Once the main street planning is completed, the projects included within will be funded through a \$5 million fund that will be capitalized over two years.

The application process for the Main Street Program is neither competitive nor a determination of eligibility. All municipalities within Oneida County are eligible and will receive funding and/or technical assistance, contingent on the availability of funding, after the application has been reviewed by the planning department.



Mark Fenton, Complete Streets expert, conducting a walk through in Boonville in 2018.

Participation in the program requires the incorporation of several pre-identified street design components that are sourced from case studies and national organizations that specialize in complete street development and tactical placemaking. These principles represent the best practices for developing accessible places and infrastructure that support local businesses and promote traffic safety. Oneida County encourages all municipalities to present their vision and thoughts on what they want their project to look like to best fit the community's needs.

The Oneida County Department of Planning has an [Application and Information Packet](#) and [Program Guidebook](#) available on the county website, and can also be reached at 315-798-5710.

New Solar and Wind Tax Appraisal Model Open for Public Comment

The 2021-2022 enacted state budget established a process for the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance (DTF) to develop a standard methodology for solar and wind energy systems with a nameplate capacity of greater than or equal to one megawatt. The DTF has posted a draft appraisal model and preliminary discount rates for public comment. For more information visit the DTF's website [here](#).

Beginning with the 2022 assessment rolls, local assessors are required to use the model and discount rates to value and place assessments on affected solar and wind energy systems. Municipalities will continue to have the flexibility to negotiate PILOTs (Payments In Lieu of Taxes).

Following the guidelines outlined by the DTF, submit all comments by **October 1, 2021**. Email cleanenergyhelp@nyserda.ny.gov with any questions.

2020 Census Numbers by County Released

The numbers for Tug Hill’s four counties are in the table below. For visualizations of additional information by county, and for other areas of the state and country, see arcg.is/0eWzy8.

County	2020 Census Population	2010 Census Population	Percent Change
Jefferson	116,721	116,229	0.40%
Lewis	26,582	27,087	-1.90%
Oneida	232,125	234,878	-1.20%
Oswego	117,525	122,109	-3.80%

Successful County Fairs Display

The commission spent most of July visiting residents of Tug Hill at the three county fairs that were open this year: Jefferson, Lewis, and Oneida. Commission staff and commissioners enjoy having the opportunity to get out in the communities like and speak to Tug Hill residents and visitors about what makes Tug Hill so special. We were also able to hand out Tug Hill Recreation Guides, maps of the region, notepads, pamphlets, and more.

The Tug Hill Recreation Guides were a big crowd pleaser. It does not come as much of a surprise as there are so many wonderful places to recreate on Tug Hill. Our display also allowed people to catch a glimpse of the industries that make Tug Hill unique: farming, logging, and fishing to name a few.

We could not have hosted our booths if it hadn’t been for all the volunteers who staffed the them. So, a big thanks to commission staff, commissioners, Joe Lawrence, and Ed Davis for their time and energy to make the commission booths such a success. We hope to attend the fairs again next year and to provide some interactive activities for fairgoers. We’ll see you there!



Community Connectedness Survey Open until August 31

Tug Hill residents, homeowners, and visitors are invited to complete a short survey at www.tinyurl.com/tughillcommunity, if they have not yet done so. It’s been wonderful seeing our survey responses go up, especially after the county fairs. We still have a few weeks left to collect your input on the Tug Hill Community and what you love about it! The commission is welcoming an intern to the team, who will be helping us make calls to residents over the next two weeks. So, keep an ear out for our calls. We look forward to receiving your input.

The findings from this survey can benefit our community members by identifying any gaps that prevent a strong sense of belonging. The findings will be shared publicly and will inform efforts to improve how residents, homeowners and visitors feel about the community. Respondents will have the chance to win a \$50 gift card to one of two Tug Hill restaurants. Note that responses are anonymous, and everyone’s identity is protected.



Contact Us

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1-888-785-2380.

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

Proper Use of Executive Sessions

Many local governing bodies question when it is appropriate to utilize an executive session, which provides officials the opportunity to discuss specific topics privately outside of public session. Section 105 of the Open Meetings Law clearly outlines the circumstances under which executive session can be used, and outlines requirements for public posting of meetings and minutes. Read the law in its entirety at [opengovernment.ny.gov/open-meetings-law#s103](https://www.opengovernment.ny.gov/open-meetings-law#s103).

Upon a majority vote of its total membership, taken in an open meeting pursuant to a motion identifying the general area or areas of the subject or subjects to be considered, a public body may conduct an executive session for the below enumerated purposes only, provided, however, that no action by formal vote shall be taken to appropriate public moneys:

- matters which will imperil the public safety if disclosed;
- any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer;
- information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed;
- discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation;
- collective negotiations pursuant to article fourteen of the civil service law;
- the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation;
- the preparation, grading or administration of examinations; and
- the proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value thereof.

Attendance at an executive session shall be permitted to any member of the public body and any other persons authorized by the public body.