

October 22, 2021

First Community Recognition Awards Presented at Commission Annual Dinner

The village of Deferiet and the Martinsburg Historical Society received the first two Tug Hill Community Recognition Awards at the Tug Hill Commission's annual dinner last week at the Tailwater Lodge in Altmar. With approximately 80 people in attendance, commission chairman Jan Bogdanowicz and executive director Katie Malinowski presented plaques to the village of Deferiet for their playground rebuild, and to the Martinsburg Historical Society for the restoration of abandoned cemeteries.

In April 2021, the commission canvassed for completed projects by both municipal and community groups that fit various criteria, with overarching goals of building local capacity, using partnerships, securing community support and being transferrable to other communities – all that mirror the Tug Hill Commission's approach to its work.

The village of Deferiet is a small, tight-knit community in Jefferson County, a former "company town" that took a hit in 2004 when the St. Regis Paper Mill closed. Spearheaded by trustee Nancy Dutton, the village undertook a multi-year effort to raise funds to rebuild their unsafe, outdated playground at a cost of approximately \$100,000. Multiple funding sources were secured, from can drives and hot dog sales to larger grants from New York State, the Northern New York Community Foundation, and KABOOM!, a private foundation. The village also secured materials from places like Home Depot and volunteer labor from Fort Drum. The build itself was a community event, and since the successful completion of the playground in 2018, the village has shared its approach and tips to many other communities.

The Martinsburg Historical Society has completed four restorations of inactive and abandoned cemeteries in the town, with a fifth underway. Each restoration is done in collaboration with the town of Martinsburg and community volunteers. Society members research the history of the cemetery and survey the names of individual buries, paying particular attention to veterans buried and the war they participated in. Using local media to publicize the efforts, often family descendants come forward and volunteer and financially support the efforts. A professional stone restoration company works on the gravestones. Once each restoration is complete the society rededicates the cemetery and honors the veterans, often including re-enactors.

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From left: Nancy Dutton, Deferiet trustee; Jan Bogdanowicz, commission chairman; Katie Malinowski, commission executive director; Janet Zando, Deferiet mayor



From left: Patricia Dietrich, Martinsburg Historical Society member; Jan Bogdanowicz, commission chairman; Katie Malinowski, commission executive director.

Venerable Folks of Tug Hill Display Available to Area Venues

Completed in 2016 as a collaboration between the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust, Traditional Arts in Upstate New York (TAUNY), the Tug Hill Commission, and artist Loretta Lepkowski, the Venerable Folks of Tug Hill display has been dusted off and is available for area venues. The traveling exhibit is meant to increase awareness of Tug Hill and the people who made it what it is today. It is composed of one large panel, seven small panels, and five racks of original paintings. It is currently on display at the Dulles State Office Building in Watertown. If your town or community group has an appropriate facility and would like to make it available to area residents, please contact Katie Malinowski, katie@tughill.org.



Lorraine-Worth Court IMA Approved

The towns of Lorraine and Worth have been working on a justice courts consolidation for several years, utilizing the NYS Uniform Justice Court Act (UJCA) 106b, which authorizes multiple municipalities to elect a single justice to preside in justice courts of two or more adjacent towns in the same county. The towns followed the process outlined in UJCA 106b and the legislation allowing for the court consolidation was approved by the State Senate and Assembly in June 2020 and signed by the Governor in November 2020.

While the plan anticipated a November 2020 election for the first consolidated court justice, legislative delays due to the Covid-19 pandemic caused final signing of the legislation to occur after election day. In the interim, the two towns appointed long time town justice from Lorraine, Eric Sheldon, to serve as their justice for 2021. The first election for the new consolidated court will be next month, and a new Justice will take over in January.

To complete the project, the two towns will share Lorraine's courtroom facilities in the town's municipal building. In August 2021, the two towns approved an Inter-Municipal Agreement under Article 5G of the NYS General Municipal Law, which outlined the sharing of the courtroom facility, staff, supplies and the justice's salary for the next two years.

There is already one functioning consolidated court in the Cooperative Tug Hill Council region and the Tug Hill Commission has helped several other towns expand their pool of potential justice candidates by assisting in changing state legislation to alter the residency requirement for this elected position. For in depth information on court issues like consolidations and other solutions to judicial vacancies, see the commission's [issue paper](#) on the topic, or a recorded [webinar](#) by the commission.

Public Officers Law Amended

Governor Hochul signed legislation this week that amends Public Officers Law Section 103, as shown below:

Section 1. Subdivision (e) of section 103 of the public officers law, as added by chapter 603 of the laws of 2011, is amended to read as follows:

(e) Agency records available to the public pursuant to article six of this chapter, as well as any proposed resolution, law, rule, regulation, policy or any amendment thereto, that is scheduled to be the subject of discussion by a public body during an open meeting shall be made available, upon request therefor, to the extent practicable ~~as determined by the agency or the department,~~ **at least twenty-four hours** prior to ~~or at~~ the meeting during which the records will be discussed. Copies of such records may be made available for a reasonable fee, determined in the same manner as provided therefor in article six of this chapter. If the agency in which a public body functions maintains a regularly and routinely updated website and utilizes a high speed internet connection, such records shall be posted on the website to the extent practicable ~~as determined by the agency or the department,~~ **at least twenty-four hours** prior to the meeting. An agency may, but shall not be required to, expend additional moneys to implement the provisions of this subdivision.

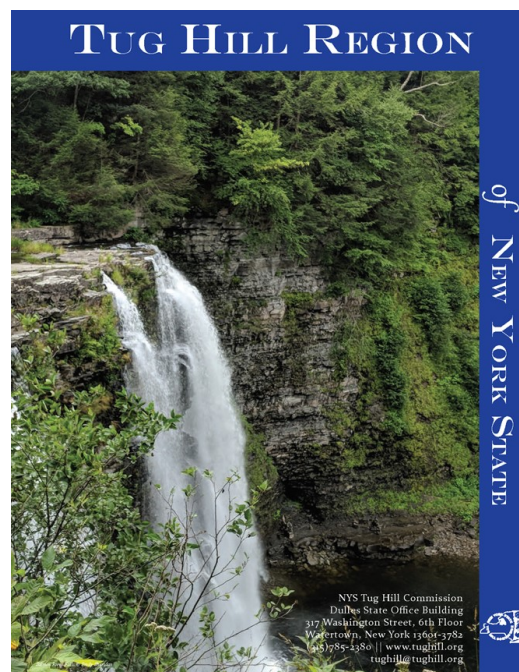
Section 2. This act shall take effect on the thirtieth day after it shall have become a law.

New Printed Tug Hill Regional Map Brochure Available

You may already be familiar with the commission's Tug Hill Regional Map Brochure, which gets periodically updated. The current version was developed in 2020 but printing was delayed due to budget constraints. The brochure includes an overview on the region, the unique environment on Tug Hill, the local economy, recreation, and energy production. Throughout the brochure you can find images highlighting the uniqueness and beauty on Tug Hill, from scenic fall views to two bucks locking antlers.

The brochure opens up into a map of the Tug Hill region. The base of the map shows the spectrum of land development based on forest biomass. Tug Hill towns and villages are the focal point of the map with destinations, roadways, waterbodies and waterways, and some trails all featured for reference.

Copies of the new Tug Hill Regional Map Brochure were handed out for the first time at the commission's annual meeting on October 14. Circuit riders will have copies available at municipal meetings in November, and they are also available at the commission office in Watertown. You can also find the digital format on our [website](https://www.tughill.org).



Budget Workshop Materials and Budget/Accounting Technical Assistance Available

Laird Petrie recently presented budget workshops in Altmar and Port Leyden. His slide deck and contingent account worksheet can be found on the commission's website, tughill.org/services/training/. Additionally, the commission has contracted with Laird in his retirement to provide budgeting and accounting technical assistance to towns and villages belonging to one of the region's five councils of governments. Interested municipalities should contact Carla Fowler, Community Development Specialist at the Tug Hill Commission, carla@tughill.org or (315) 785-2380 to request assistance.

Examples of services Laird can provide include:

- Assistance with annual budget preparation, including attendance at budget workshops when requested.
- Assistance with preparation of the Annual Update Document (AUD) required to be filed with OSC each year.
- Training for municipal accounting personnel and aid with developing accounting records required by OSC.
- Assistance with multi-year capital plans including establishing, accounting and reporting for capital reserve funds.
- Assistance with long-term operational plans including the use of various reserve funds authorized by General Municipal Law.
- Assistance with the planning, budgeting and accounting for capital projects including those involving debt and grant funds.
- Assistance to local officials with shared service and government reorganization initiatives (dissolutions, consolidations, etc.).
- Assessment of various internal controls and policies and recommendations to governing boards as to how to effectively safeguard municipal assets.



Lewis County Community Choice Aggregation Information Session

October 28

Lewis County has chosen Joule Assets, Inc. as their Community Choice Aggregation Administrator to streamline renewable energy procurement. Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) is a tool available to municipalities to purchase electricity from renewable energy suppliers for their communities.

Lewis County is holding a kickoff meeting on **Thursday, October 28 at 6:00 p.m.** at the Lewis County JCC Education Center to provide information to municipalities. Please come to learn more from Joule Assets. Joule Assets will be a one-stop-shop for CCA information and will streamline the electricity procurement process for Lewis County's towns and villages.

AOT Annual Meeting and Training Schools Registration Opens

November 1

The Association of Towns of the State of New York (AOT) is holding its 2022 Annual Meeting & Training School from February 20 through 23, 2022 at the New York Marriott Marquis in New York, NY. Registration materials will be available at www.nytowns.org starting November 1. At this time, attendees will be required to show proof of vaccination and wear a mask in order to attend the event.

AOT Tea Time Facts Sheets and Recordings Available

AOT is providing short fact sheets and videos about pertinent town topics, called Town Teas. Four have been completed so far, and can be accessed by clicking the links below:

- [Town Tea 1: OML & Virtual Meetings](#)
- [Town Tea 2: Transitions in Office](#)
- [Town Tea 3: Highway Fund](#)
- [Town Tea 4: Quorums and Voting Requirements](#)

Last Chance to Register!



**Agriculture and the
Lewis County Experience**

A Webinar with Joe Lawrence
Tuesday October 26, 2021
7:00 pm

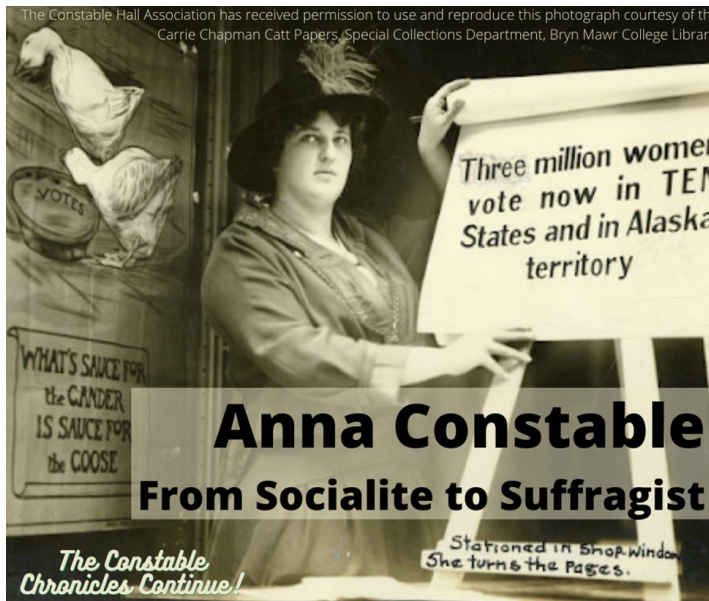
To Register: <https://tinyurl.com/LCFarming>

The history of the Tug Hill Region and its economic successes are strongly tied to its natural resources. From subsistence farming to today's high-tech practices, agriculture has been a key part of that history. This presentation will share some of the unique history, current happenings, and future opportunities for agriculture in the region.

The Constable Chronicles Continue!

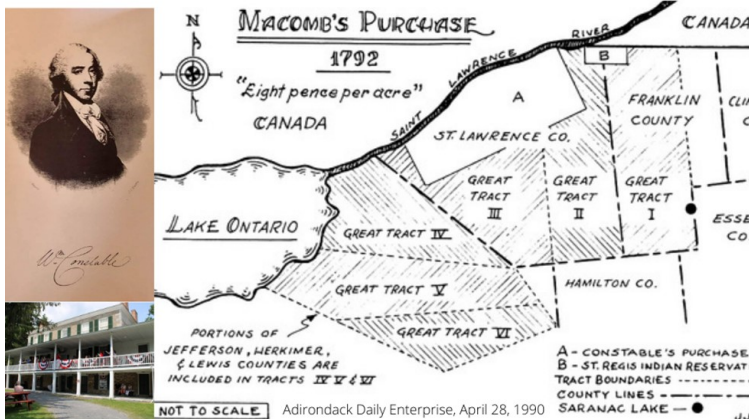
The Constable Hall Association and the Tug Hill Commission are pleased to present two *Constable Chronicles* webinars this fall.

The first webinar, by Andrew Reid, educator and Constable Hall Association board member, will take place on **Tuesday, November 9, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.** [Pre-registration is required.](#) This presentation, titled "Anna Constable: From Socialite to Suffragist," will follow the life of Anna Constable from her family's connection to Constable Hall, her years in the upper circles of New York City social life, and her development into an influential suffragist in the United States during the final push for equal voting rights for women.



On **Tuesday, December 7, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.**, join Martha Constable Murray and Peter Hayes for "William Constable, Spirit of the North Country." [Click here to pre-register.](#) At one time, William Constable owned most of the North Country, yet never visited it – he hangs over our early history like a ghost. Almost every person involved in the original development connects to him in some way. Join us to learn how he and his interesting wife set in motion our community - and how his spirit of adventure was picked up by the next generation.

William Constable "Spirit of the North Country"



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1-888-785-2380.

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

NYS Comptroller Introduces COVID-19 Relief Program Tracker

The Office of the State Comptroller has created a web site to track money received and spent in response to COVID-19, including the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund under the American Rescue Plan. The web site reports that it will be updated monthly and will be expanded over time as more information becomes available. Data is also available for download in Excel format.

The comptroller's Relief Program Tracker can be found at: www.osc.state.ny.us/reports/covid-relief-program-tracker