

Diamond Maps Demo in Carthage

On March 15, Tug Hill Commission staff and several members of the Northern Oneida County Council of Governments (NOCCOG) GPS team met with Department of Public Works employees in the village of Carthage. Over the last several years, the villages of Carthage and West Carthage have been successfully georeferencing village infrastructure with GPS equipment in the field. As part of an ongoing effort to map and track village assets, village data is uploaded to Diamond Maps, a cloud-based GIS software designed for smaller municipalities and rural utilities.

Diamond Maps is being considered as an alternative software for mapping municipal infrastructure through the pilot NOCCOG GPS program. Since 2019, NOCCOG's GPS project has been based on a shared service plan to map water, sewer, lighting, sidewalks, and other infrastructure to compile an online database and map. Collecting detailed, accurate information on rural municipal utilities is of crucial importance considering staff turnover and retirements, emergency situations like water main breaks, and ongoing improvement projects. This multi-year process, interrupted by COVID-19, is set to resume in the spring of 2023.

This meeting enabled commission staff and NOCCOG GPS team members to experience a peer demonstration of how Carthage uses Diamond Maps in the field and their administrative experience with the software.

For more information, contact NOCCOG circuit rider John Healt at jhealt@tughill.org.



Taking point data with Diamond Maps and an external Arrow GPS device.



Village of Carthage DPW, NOCCOG GPS team, and commission staff exploring software differences on various platforms.

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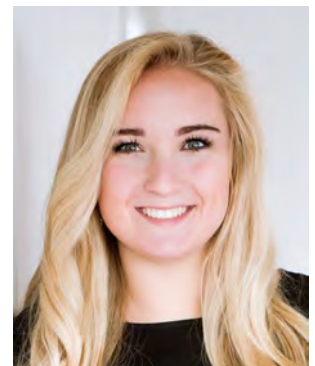
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New Associate Circuit Rider for North Shore and Salmon Rivers COGs

The North Shore and Salmon Rivers Councils of Governments (COGs) have added new associate circuit rider Heidi Kelley to their ranks, joining current associate circuit rider Vern Sundet in providing meeting coverage for town and village board meetings.

Heidi Kelley, of Redfield was born and raised in the Tug Hill region, growing up on Fish Creek and the Salmon River. She enjoys outdoor recreation and woodworking, coaching softball, and serving in the Redfield Volunteer Fire Department. She would like to start a hobby farm and garden in the future.

In addition to meetings in the North Shore and Salmon Rivers area, Heidi will be covering meetings in the Cooperative Tug Hill Council area, as time and opportunity allows. She is excited for the opportunity to provide assistance to the COGs and looks forward to meeting Tug Hill's local leaders.



NOCCOG Executive Board Meets

The Executive Board of the Northern Oneida County Council of Governments met Wednesday, March 22, at the Trenton municipal offices. In addition to the routine business of the meeting, there was much discussion regarding the growing GPS program ("Diamond Maps" see page 1). The purchase of an additional global navigation satellite system (GNSS) receiver was approved, allowing three mappers to collect data simultaneously. Also discussed was the transition from the current GIS Cloud mapping program to Diamond Maps, which should allow easier accessibility for the municipalities as data is being collected. The GPS mapping service is offered at no charge to municipal members of NOCCOG.

In addition to an update from the Tug Hill Commission, other topics discussed included the dissolution of the Local Government Education Committee and possible future trainings, the role of the fiscal agent with the council, possible bonding of the fiscal officer, insurance for the GPS equipment, the new scholarship program, stipulations regarding covering the registration for the Local Government Conference, a new NOCCOG brochure design, the village of Boonville looking for an auditor and the possibility of "Quick Reference" cards with basic rules and regulations relating to fundamental municipal operations.

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled for June 15, 2023, at 2:00 pm, at the Trenton municipal offices.

Micron Planning Efforts Begin in Oswego County

Commission staff participated in meetings in Oswego County this week, where planning is underway to take advantage of opportunities related to the Micron Technology semiconductor fabrication plant. Micron's proposed \$100 billion investment in Clay, just outside of Syracuse and four miles from the southern edge of Tug Hill, will have impacts far beyond the town borders of Clay. Micron is expecting to directly employ 9,000 people by the end of construction and to spur the creation of around 50,000 total jobs in the region.

Oswego County is preparing for the possible opportunities and impacts of the semiconductor factory by starting discussions about the needs of current residents as well as people that will be coming to the area. Oswego County has created a committee to invite stakeholders and experts to think about how Oswego County can best prepare for the impacts. Oswego County officials held a meeting on March 22 with supervisors and mayors from across the county to begin a conversation around what different municipalities around the county want their future to look like. These meetings will serve as a starting point for creating plans to address the expected growth in the area in every aspect.



Northern Border Regional Commission 2023 Catalyst Program Grant

The Northern Border Regional Commission (NBRC) has announced the [2023 Catalyst Program grant application opportunity](#). The Catalyst Program is designed to stimulate economic growth and inspire partnerships that improve rural economic vitality across the four-state NBRC region. As part of the program, the Commission expects to fund a wide variety of economic development projects in categories that include infrastructure, workforce development, and outdoor recreation in Maine, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont. The Commission will make a historic level of funding available through the program-- up to \$45 million in grants, including up to \$20 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

Find more details on [NBRC's website](#).

National Report Released on Economic and Workforce Challenges and Opportunities Facing Rural Places

In 2022, the Tug Hill Commission participated in Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDCs) stakeholder listening sessions. The listening sessions were geared to identify critical investments needed to build community capacity and improve quality-of-life in rural America. Invitations were sent to stakeholders working at organizations and regional entities across the nation, including through professional networks. Participants came from land-grant universities, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies, among others. The report, [Investing in Rural Capacity: Comprehensive Summary of National Rural Development Stakeholder Listening Sessions](#), is intended to inform a broad range of rural development partners, including leaders within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), practitioners, decision-makers, and governments to inform where programmatic efforts and resources may be most effective in tackling key issues facing rural communities.



Established by the Rural Development Act of 1972, and funded through USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), [Regional Rural Development Centers](#) (RRDCs) are regionally focused centers to strengthen the capacity of local citizens to guide the future of their rural communities by linking research and educational outreach capacity of the nation’s public universities with communities, local decision-makers, entrepreneurs, families, and farmers to address a wide range of issues. The report summarizes results from eight listening sessions, which convened stakeholders in facilitated dialogues focused on regional and national issues. It also integrates qualitative data from a national survey conducted in Fall 2021.

Respondents who primarily work with Northeast communities, on average, indicated that addressing physical infrastructure and public services was the most important topic. Responses especially highlighted the need for broadband services, diversification of energy production and transmission, and pressures on housing availability and affordability. Economic development – particularly entrepreneurship and small business creation and retention – and work-

Priority Ranks

	North Central	Northeast	South	West	National Scope	Total
1	Economic development	Physical infrastructure and public services	Workforce development, training, and education	Physical infrastructure and public services	Health	Physical infrastructure and public services
2	Workforce development, training, and education	Economic development	Physical infrastructure and public services	Economic development	Physical infrastructure and public services	Economic development
3	Physical infrastructure and public services	Workforce development, training, and education	Health	Health	Economic development	Workforce development, training, and education
4	Community vibrancy	Climate change, climate variability, and extreme weather	Economic development	Workforce development, training, and education	Community vibrancy	Health

force training were also top priorities. Climate change, climate variability, and extreme weather ranked in the top four priority areas. For detailed results and more information on the Northeast RRDC, please visit aese.psu.edu/nercd.

Reducing Liability for Highway and DPW Workshop

Cornell Local Roads Program (CLRP) is holding an in-person workshop on “**Reducing Liability for Highway and Public Works Department**” on **Tuesday, April 4** from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The workshop will be held at Oswego County Cooperative Extension – Amboy Education Center located at 748 State Route 183, Williamstown, NY.

This a completely new course with topics including:

- Explaining the general nature of highway liability and the nature of municipal duties.
- Determining how courts evaluate a municipality’s liability for the maintenance and design of local roads and streets.
- A listing of the special defenses applicable to claims when agencies have good plans and procedures to repair defects.
- Discussing how liability arising from motor vehicle accidents involving municipal vehicles is evaluated.
- Discussing the contrast between insurance and indemnity.
- Setting up department records to reduce risk and provide support when claims are made.

To register for the workshop: Fill out and send CLRP the online [form](#), or [Register online](#)

2023 Highway School June 5-7, Ithaca College

Registration is now open for the Association of Towns of the State of New York and the NYS LTAP Center - Cornell Local Roads Program's annual highway school. The early registration fee, on or before May 19, is \$125. After May 19 attendees must register on-site at a fee rate of \$165. This year's topics include: road drainage; drug testing; purchasing; legal panel; alternative vehicles; managing employees; pavement preservation; and funding opportunities.

Stay up to date with current information about the Highway School on the web at: [Association of Towns](#) or the NYS LTAP Center - [Cornell Local Roads Program](#).

New York State Annual Burn Ban Starts

The annual state ban on outdoor burning began on March 16 and extends through May 14. With the recent snowfalls, the ground remains mainly snow covered throughout the north country, but once spring arrives conditions quickly arise which are conducive to wildfires. Open burning remains the single greatest cause of wildfires in New York.

Since the spring burn ban was instituted in 2009, the number of wildfires has diminished by 40%, but each year DEC Forest Rangers continue to extinguish dozens of wildfires that burn hundreds of acres. In addition, local fire departments, many of which are staffed by volunteers, all too often must leave their jobs and families to respond to wildfires caused by illegal debris fires. Please be cognizant of the dangers of spring burning and refrain from outdoor fires during the burn ban.

The DEC posts a daily fire danger rating map on their website at www.dec.ny.gov/lands/68329.html as soon as there is a moderate risk anywhere in NY State. Violators of the state's open burning regulations are subject to both criminal and civil enforcement actions, with a minimum fine of \$500 for the first offense. More information about NY State's burn ban and about open burning regulations in general see the commission's white paper [here](#) or the DEC's "[FIREWISE New York](#)" or "[Open Burning](#)" page.

Town Clerks Association Conference Registration Open

The NYS Town Clerks Association annual conference will be held at the Downtown Syracuse Marriott from April 23 to 26. The conference opens on Sunday with an opportunity to meet vendors and attend a mixer. Monday and Tuesday are the main day-long class sessions, with a closing session and guest speaker on Wednesday.

Classes run the gamut from basic classes for new clerks to current interest topics and classes to help any clerk learn new skills. Presentations on NYS Department of Health issues, DECALS, town clerk basics, petitions, NYS Comptroller sessions, NYS Retirement sessions, games of chance, vital records and many others are on the agenda.

Registration for the full conference is \$125 for members and \$225 for non-members, with a one-day registration cost of \$90. The deadline to register is April 15. For more information on the conference and the link to register visit the [NYS Town Clerk's Association website](#) and see the conference agenda [HERE](#).

NYWEA Wastewater Panel for Local Officials April 23

The NY Water Environmental Association (NYWEA), together with the Environmental Finance Center at Syracuse University, is holding a panel on wastewater for local and elected officials on Wednesday, April 29 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in Philadelphia, NY. The event is free of charge but limited to 25 people, and is geared toward village mayors, town Supervisors, administrators, clerks, treasurers, and sewer and/or board members who want to learn more about effective wastewater management and wastewater treatment plant funding opportunities.

For registration or additional information, contact Patricia Cerro-Reehil at pcr@nywea.org or visit the NYWEA [website](#).

Contact Us

NYS Tug Hill Commission
317 Washington Street
Watertown, NY 13601

Phone: 315-785-2380
Toll Free within the region:
1-888-785-2380
Email: tughill@tughill.org

Visit us at:

Web: www.tughill.org

Facebook:
[www.facebook.com/
TugHillCommission](http://www.facebook.com/TugHillCommission)

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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](#).