

## 2023 Local Leaders Survey - Please Return Today!

The Tug Hill Commission sent many of you a survey in the mail earlier this week. Our enabling legislation requires us to survey the region's local leaders every five years, to gauge our performance and gather input on future work. We mailed the 2023 survey to 382 village, town, and county officials, as well as many of our partner organizations.

All survey responses are kept confidential. The responses will be combined into a white paper delivered to Governor Hochul and the New York State Legislature later this year. Survey results will also be reported at local meetings of the Tug Hill Commission board and the region's councils of governments. The results will also be available on our website, [www.tughill.org](http://www.tughill.org). Please return your completed survey no later than May 5, 2023. Thank you!

## Village of Pulaski Joins Salmon Rivers COG

For the first time in nearly a decade, the membership of the Salmon Rivers Council of Government (SRCG) has changed. The village of Pulaski contacted Salmon Rivers, asking what the village would need to do to become members and participants in the council of governments (COG). The village cited the Salmon River as "an invaluable resource to its visitors, residents, and [the village's] very future" that runs "through the very heart of the village."

In late March, the Salmon Rivers Council of Governments held a meeting with this question as its primary purpose, and the group agreed that Pulaski, with its presence in the Salmon Rivers watershed, is closely aligned with the purposes of the group. The group voted unanimously to extend an offer of membership to Pulaski, effective with the village becoming a signatory to the SRCG Intermunicipal Agreement and payment of dues (not billed until later this year).

Tug Hill Commission executive director Katie Malinowski and Salmon Rivers circuit rider Paul Baxter attended the Monday, April 10 meeting of the Pulaski village board to discuss the topic further. As in other councils of governments in the Tug Hill region, the commission is authorized to provide Tug Hill services to COG members beyond the commission's legislative composition.



Commission Executive Director Katie Malinowski addresses Pulaski village board.

At that meeting, the village of Pulaski voted to authorize signature to the SRCG Intermunicipal Agreement and to join the Salmon Rivers Council of Governments, and with that, SRCG welcomed Pulaski as its newest member.

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## Conference Presentations Available

Thank you to all who attended, spoke, sponsored, or exhibited at our 32<sup>nd</sup> annual Local Government Conference at Turning Stone on April 5 and 6. Most of the PowerPoint presentations from the conference sessions are now available on the commission's [website](http://www.tughill.org).

If you would like to share your ideas for future training topics, please contact Jennifer at (315) 785-2392 or email [jennifer@tughill.org](mailto:jennifer@tughill.org).

# Abandoned Cemeteries and Municipal Responsibilities

A NYS Tug Hill Commission Webinar Presentation

## Event Details

This event is available via Zoom.

Friday, May 19, 2023  
10:00 AM to 11:30 AM

## Registration

To register for this free event, sign up with the following link:

[tinyurl.com/abandonedcem](https://tinyurl.com/abandonedcem)

or by calling the Tug Hill Commission office at (315) 785-2380.

## About the Presentation

There are an estimated 6,000 cemeteries of all types and sizes in New York State. In the last several decades, the number of state regulated non-profit cemeteries has dramatically fallen as hundreds have failed. When regulated cemeteries fail or are abandoned, New York State law obliges towns to care for those cemeteries. There are exceptions for private, family, or religious cemeteries.

This webinar will explore options available to towns in preventing cemetery abandonment; the issues towns face regarding abandoned cemeteries; and information on other burial and zoning considerations falling under municipal jurisdiction.



## About the Speaker

**David Fleming, Jr.**, *Featherstonhaugh, Wiley & Clyne, LLP Chief Operating Officer*

David has served eight terms as a town supervisor, one term as a deputy supervisor, and is the cemeterian responsible for three formally abandoned town cemeteries. He has provided representation for cemeteries and towns for 28 years. His efforts have led to nearly \$100 million in various cemetery projects and related development. During the pandemic of 2020, he was an emergency management resource to state and national organizations in death care planning and response. He has been a cemetery and abandonment consultant for both local governments and state representatives and is knowledgeable about historic preservation and restoration.



# Meet our Intern: An Interview with Kristle Hinola

## Where are you from?

I am originally from Beaumont, Texas. I lived there until I moved away for college.

## Tell me about growing up in Beaumont?

Beaumont feels similar to the Watertown area in terms of population. Texas also has a “southern feel” - everyone is friendly and gets to know everyone, and people continue to keep in touch long after moving away. I still keep in touch with my kindergarten teacher.

## What are some of your favorite hobbies?

I love all types of dance! I was on a dance team all my life. As a child I was taught classic dance, like ballet, and in college I joined a hip hop team. In the military, I like to lift weights at the gym. I’m short, so lifting heavy weights is so empowering. My family and I like to hike and spend time in nature. It’s a nice escape from day-to-day reality.



## What brought you to the Tug Hill Region?

Fort Drum brought me here. Before Watertown I was stationed in South Korea. I hadn’t known about Tug Hill before moving here, but since I live off base, it’s given me a chance to get out and get to know the people and the area better.

## Tell us a little about your experiences in the Army and Fort Drum?

I have my EMT license and basic life support certification. In the Army and at Fort Drum, I worked at the troop clinic triaging and screening patients for the physician assistants.

## What are some of your favorite places to spend your free time?

Lately, my husband and I love going to the Black River Trail with our dog. We enjoy the view, and it’s wonderful to be able to let the dog loose and run around in such an open space. We’ve have also been to Calcium and Alexandria Bay recently.

## What projects are you working on for the Tug Hill Commission?

Firstly, I’ve been reformatting the Lowville Comprehensive Plan website to make it a more accessible living document. Secondly, I’ve been researching local and state laws on civilian commercial drones. There are a lot of questions and a need for information resources about how, when, and where commercial drones can be flown, especially when considering nearby private properties. Thirdly, I’ve been helping organize CTHC ZBA cases that span back to the 1970s.

## What do you enjoy most about working at the Tug Hill Commission so far?

The people. Everyone here, since day one, has been so welcoming and invested in how I’m doing. It’s nice to work in a team environment. Working with our other intern, Chris, also helps with workflow.

## What do you plan to do in the future?

Short term, I am starting Harvard Law in the fall. Long-term, I’m hoping to move more into the national security field, especially with their legal team. A dream job would be to work in Washington, D.C., in National Intelligence or for the National Security Council.

## What would you like to share with future Tug Hill Commission interns?

I would say this to future interns, especially those from Drum, “Don’t be afraid of getting in there.” I was a bit intimidated when I started my internship, but it’s very manageable. You must have self-direction and time management, skills, but it’s great practice for whatever step you want to take next. Learn as much as you can here, absorb it, and take it with you.

# Highway Departments and Town Budgets

There is often a lot of confusion as to who is really in charge of the town highway department. Is it the town board or the highway superintendent? This session will discuss statutory duties of both the town board and the highway superintendent when it comes to highway operations including the highway budget, hiring and firing highway workers and control of highway equipment.

Since retirement from the Office of the State Comptroller in 2021, instructor Laird Petrie has been providing technical assistance and training to towns and villages in a four-county area through a contract with the Tug Hill Commission.



A NYS Tug Hill  
Commission Workshop

**Wednesday, May 31, 2023**  
**6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

**Village of Adams Municipal Building**  
**3 South Main Street**  
**Adams, NY 13605**

Call 315-785-2380 or email [tughill@tughill.org](mailto:tughill@tughill.org) to register.

# Community Connect Broadband Grants Due June 20

USDA's Rural Utilities Service has announced that approximately \$79 million will be available nationwide for the fiscal year 2023 for non-profits, for-profits, and state, local, and Tribal governments to apply by June 20 for [Community Connect](#) grants to construct rural broadband networks. Key priorities are:

- Assisting rural communities to recover economically through more and better market opportunities and through improved infrastructure.
- Ensuring all rural residents have equitable access to rural development programs and benefits from rural development funded projects.
- Reducing climate pollution and increasing resilience to the impacts of climate change through economic support to rural communities.

Key components of this funding include:

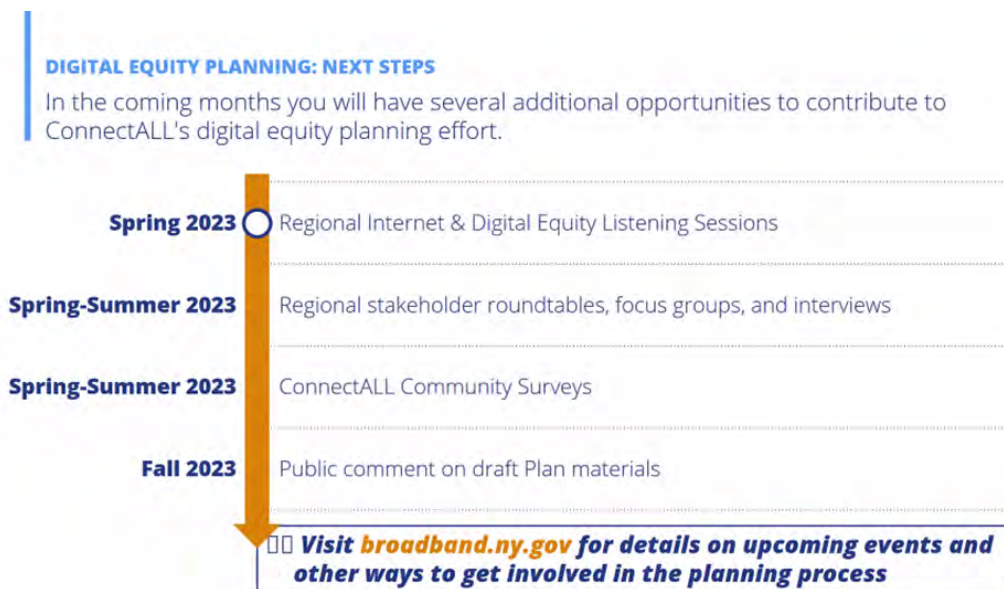
- *Minimum Award:* \$100,000.
- *Maximum Award:* \$5,000,000.
- *Anticipated Award Date:* September 2023.
- *Performance Period:* 3 years.

The program provides financial assistance to eligible applicants that will provide service at or above the broadband grant speed to all premises in rural, economically challenged communities where broadband service does not exist. The deployment of broadband services on a "community-oriented connectivity" basis stimulates economic development and provides enhanced educational and health care opportunities in rural areas. For more information, contact Randall Millhiser ([randall.milhiser@usda.gov](mailto:randall.milhiser@usda.gov)) USDA Rural Development, (202)-578-6926.

## Regional Internet & Digital Equity Listening Sessions Held

All three of the Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) that cover the Tug Hill region, in collaboration with the Empire State Development's ConnectAll office and regional digital inclusion advocates, recently held *Regional Internet and Digital Equity Listening Sessions* in their respective regions. Mohawk Valley (March 15) and North Country (March 28) gave presentations regarding the status of on-going study, funding, and remaining areas of need. Central New York REDC met on April 4, to host agency presentations and gather input.

The sessions featured breakout groups for facilitated discussion with participants who comprised local leaders, internet service providers, educational institutions, workforce development organizations, and area non-profits that serve at-risk populations. The exercise gathered information on existing barriers to internet access and the resources and opportunities we have to close the digital divide. There are several chances to contribute to the effort coming up. See below for ConnectALL's digital equity planning next steps:





# BLACK RIVER WATERSHED CONFERENCE 2023

**JUNE 14, 2023 - 9AM - 4PM @ ZERO DOCK STREET, CARTHAGE**



## Featured Content

The conference will feature speakers on topics including invasive species, the Black River Adaptive Modeling project, Soil and Water Conservation District updates, emerging contaminants including PFAS, and road salt research.

## Event Details

The Black River Watershed Conference will be held at Zero Dock Street Restaurant and Bar, 130 Canal St, Carthage, NY 13619. Registration will begin at 8:30AM. Breakfast and lunch are included with registration.

## Registration

There is a registration fee of \$45 per person. Please register by May 30 using the following link: [tinyurl.com/BRWC2023](https://tinyurl.com/BRWC2023).

Questions?

Contact Jennifer Harvill

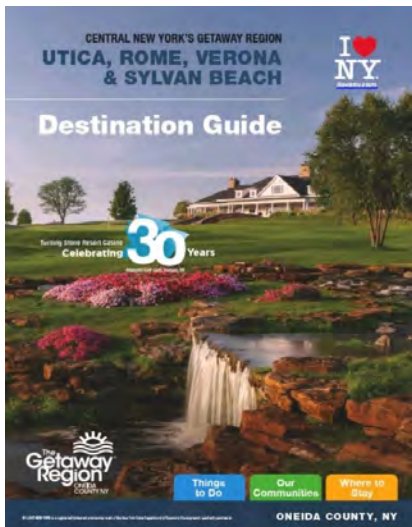


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# Oneida County 2023 Destination Guide Released



Oneida County Tourism recently announced the launch of its destination guide for 2023. This year's cover features Turning Stone Resort Casino's Atunyote Golf Course, honoring Turning Stone's 30-year anniversary. The guide offers a comprehensive look at all the best destinations and experiences that Oneida County has to offer for tourists and locals. For the second year, Oneida County Tourism has partnered with Sentinel Media, in Rome, who designed and produced the destination guide.

Billed as the "ultimate resource" for those looking to explore the beauty of Oneida County, the guide is packed with stunning photos, detailed maps, tips, itineraries, and hotels. It provides an overview of some of the region's top attractions; from historic sites and museums to outdoor adventures and family-friendly activities. The new guide highlights the local beverage and cheese trails, and there is a new section dedicated to the A-to-Z Food Tour, showcasing local dishes for each letter of the alphabet.

The 2023 Oneida County Destination Guide is available in both print and digital formats. Visitors can pick up a copy at the tourism office located at Exit 31 in Utica, request to have a guide mailed, or access the interactive, digital version on the OCT website at

[www.oneidacountytourism.com/request-destination-guide/](http://www.oneidacountytourism.com/request-destination-guide/).

## Clean Energy Conference, June 1-2

After a five-year hiatus, ANCA's Clean Energy Conference is back! You're invited to join ANCA and the Mohawk Valley Clean Energy Team for a gathering of stakeholders and innovators as they explore incentives and opportunities, as well as challenges, related to state and federal policies like New York's Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act and the U.S. Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

With a focus on elevating local interests and marginalized voices, the conference will explore how we can work together to meet climate goals while advancing a clean energy economy that strengthens businesses and communities across northern New York.

**What:** Clean Energy Conference - The Climate Act and You: Maximizing Community Benefits While Meeting State and Federal Climate Goals

**When:** Thursday-Friday, June 1-2, 2023

**Where:** Irish Cultural Center of the Mohawk Valley, Utica, NY

Please visit the [ANCA website](http://ANCA website) to register and view a detailed conference agenda.

## Tug Hill Commission YouTube Channel Planning and Zoning Playlist

In recent years, the Tug Hill Commission has increased the number of videos on their YouTube channel (which can be found at [tinyurl.com/TugHillYouTubeChannel](http://tinyurl.com/TugHillYouTubeChannel)) on a wide variety of topics – commission meetings, local history, natural resources, local music, and of course, planning and zoning.

YouTube has a feature called Playlists, where videos with a common topic or theme can be collected together into a list, and the Tug Hill Commission has created a new playlist on planning, zoning, and land use to make it easier to find those videos.

The new Planning and Zoning Videos playlist can be found at [tinyurl.com/TugHillYouTubePlanningPlaylist](http://tinyurl.com/TugHillYouTubePlanningPlaylist), and also as a link on the Planning page on the Tug Hill Commission website, [tughill.org/services/planning/](http://tughill.org/services/planning/).

### Contact Us

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**Instagram:** [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/tughillorg)

To request our newsletter electronically please email [gwen@tughill.org](mailto:gwen@tughill.org) or call 1-888-785-2380.

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