

CTHC Celebrates 50 Years

On Thursday, September 26 the Cooperative Tug Hill Council (CTHC) held their annual fall meeting at the Steak and Brew Restaurant in Turin. Sixteen of the 22 CTHC towns and villages were present, along with five Tug Hill Commissioners and members of the commission staff and several other guests, for a total of 45. Following approval of the previous meeting's minutes and the most recent financial report, the 2025 proposed budget was presented by Chairman Roger Tibbetts. He reported that with the current funds on hand, dues should remain stable for several years. The proposed budget was approved.

The evening's speaker was Laird Petrie, retired from the NYS Comptroller's office and currently under contract with the Tug Hill Commission. He spoke about the types of assistance he provides to Tug Hill municipalities through the contract. Laird was also an associate circuit rider for CTHC many years ago and he shared memories of that time and how it helped him know the difficulties small municipalities face to meet their financial requirements. Commission executive director Katie Malinowski reported on the minimum maintenance road process in Lorraine now that they have state authority for the process. She also updated members on ambulance issues, which are becoming an increasing concern for local services and municipalities, and on the Real Property Tax Law 480a issue. The commission has recently updated white papers on both subjects. Planning director Matt Johnson updated the attendees on several planning projects that commission staff is working on with the CTHC towns and villages, including comprehensive plans, zoning amendments, and the very first zoning law for the village of Constableville.

Circuit Rider Angie Kimball spoke about changes the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is proposing to the Fire Brigade standards which could have severe impacts on the volunteer fire service if approved as written. CTHC approved submitting written comments against the proposal. She also spoke about the continuing search for a new associate circuit rider and updated the attendees on the progress at splitting the Cooperative ZBA into two boards to accommodate more municipalities.



Roger Tibbetts (standing) reflects on 50 years of working together to plan for the future, developing plans for towns and villages at the local level and helping maintain local control, and sharing knowledge and efforts where possible (adapted from CTHC's mission statement).

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Finally, this year marks the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Cooperative Tug Hill Council, originally formed in October 1974 as the Cooperative Tug Hill Planning Board. A brochure with facts about CTHC's mission, philosophy and services along with a timeline of major events was given to attendees. The brochure also lists the first representatives from each of the original nine towns and the current executive committee members and representatives from each municipality. Interestingly, one of the original members from Osceola was Fran Yerdon, who 50 years later, is still a representative from Osceola as well as a director for the executive committee, quite an impressive show of dedication to Osceola, CTHC and Tug Hill as a whole.



Original CTHC chairman Fran Yerdon, Osceola and current CTHC chairman Roger Tibbetts, Rodman. CTHC has only had one other chairman, George Bibbins Sr., Pinckney, who passed away in 2020.

Commission Board Meeting

Monday, October 21 at 10:00 a.m. at the Town of Martinsburg, 5405 Cemetery Road, Martinsburg, New York 13404. The public is welcome to attend.

Town Clerk “Lunch & Learn” Workshop Held in Trenton

On Monday, September 30, the town of Trenton hosted the NYS Tug Hill Commission, the Office of the NYS Comptroller and the Northern Oneida County Council of Governments as they presented a hybrid workshop which covered the many fiscal responsibilities of town clerks.

The no-cost session featured a free lunch for those who attended in person.

Presenter, Ingrid Otto, CPA Auditor 2, from the Office of the New York State Comptroller assisted town clerks in understanding their major financial duties and responsibilities.



RACOG September Board Meeting Recap

The River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) board met on Thursday, September 26 in Wilna. The board reviewed and approved the RACOG Traffic Safety Initiative Report that was put together by Christopher Barboza, planner and traffic safety coordinator at the Tug Hill Commission. The board also got an update from April Roggio with the University at Albany about the survey completed for the RACOG region. She also provided an update on a potential grant project that would explore initiatives to help address the volunteer needs of EMS and fire departments, using RACOG as a potential pilot project area.



The board also heard updates on the Civic Service Student Activity Program that will start on October 24 for students from several school districts. RACOG will cover the lunch expense for the students and presenters. To meet the students' needs in completing a project for their Seal of Civic Readiness on their diplomas, the RACOG board approved the formation of a student board to report to RACOG for any students interested.

The board also approved sending a letter opposing the new OSHA rules for fire departments, due to the impact it will have on their volunteer departments.

The next RACOG board meeting will be held on January 23, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. at the town of Wilna municipal building, 414 State St., Carthage.

Municipal Benefits of GPS Mapping Session Held in Lee

On Thursday, September 26, the Northern Oneida County Council of Governments worked with the NYS Tug Hill Commission and presented a free workshop showcasing the numerous benefits of GPS mapping in municipalities, held at the Lee Town Hall. Coffee and doughnuts were provided for all those in attendance, and each learned the value of GPS mapping over a broad range of topics, from infrastructure inventory to an effective transfer of knowledge. There was also a demonstration of Diamond Maps, which is the program that is most used when mapping data points.

If a municipality is interested in learning more about GPS Mapping, please reach out to the Tug Hill Commission, or John Healt at 315-941-2818, or email jhealt@tughill.org.



NYS Council on the Arts Capital Projects Grants Available

Up to \$80 million in capital funding is now available to nonprofit arts and cultural organizations throughout the New York State Council on the Arts Capital Projects Fund. This funding will invest in capital improvement projects that allow organizations to sustain and expand cultural programming for diverse audiences, promote accessibility and environmental sustainability, preserve and create jobs, and contribute to the growth of New York's arts and tourism sectors.

WHO: All NYS nonprofit arts and cultural organizations are encouraged to apply.

WHAT: This program has three opportunity areas:

- **Small and Mid-sized Capital Improvement Grants for Arts and Culture:** Grants of up to \$2 million may be awarded for projects prioritizing accessibility, artistry, cultural development, sustainability, health and safety, and structural and historical improvements. No-match grants of \$10,000-\$25,000 and \$50,000-\$99,000 are available for organizations with operating budgets under \$2 million. Strong projects combine excellence in design with informed decisions about organizational capacity and community needs that will positively affect the future of arts and cultural organizations across New York.
- **Large Capital Improvement Grants for Arts and Culture:** Grants for impactful, large-scale capital improvements. Grants will range from \$2 million to \$10 million for projects that have a total cost of \$4 million or more. This funding will support investments that allow organizations to thrive by expanding cultural programming, reaching new and diverse audiences, and promoting accessibility. These grants will also help advance the State's goals around economic development, diversity, equity and inclusion, and will require all applicants to commit to social equity initiatives and access plans that serve all New Yorkers.
- **Capital Design Grants for Arts and Culture:** Grants to support the development of mid-stage and advanced design documents for arts and cultural nonprofits with operating budgets of \$10 million or less across the state that are planning eligible capital improvements and are currently in the early stages of design. Grants will range from \$50,000-\$500,000, for a maximum of 50 percent of the design phase's total cost. No-match grants of \$50,000 to \$99,000 will also be available for organizations with budgets under \$2 million.

WHEN: The deadline to submit completed applications is January 14, 2025.

WHERE: The application portal and guidelines for these opportunities are open and can be accessed on NYSCA's website, www.arts.ny.gov.

The application manual for FY2025 can be found [here](#), containing useful dates, preregistration information, eligibility requirements, and program contact information.

Restore NY Round 9 Grants Available

Round 9 of municipal grant funding for the Restore New York Communities Initiative is open. Restore NY aims to provide financial assistance for the revitalization of communities through the elimination and redevelopment of blighted residential, commercial, and mixed-use properties and structures.

WHO: NYS local government entities (counties, cities, towns, and villages) are invited to apply. Municipalities can sub-grant to a private entity but must themselves be the named the applicant and recipient of any awarded funding.

WHAT: Projects involving the demolition, deconstruction, rehabilitation, and/or reconstruction of vacant, abandoned, condemned, or surplus properties are eligible under this program.

WHEN: Interested applicants must submit an "Intent to Apply Form" by **Wednesday, October 23 at 5:00 p.m.** Full applications are due **Friday, December 20 at 5:00 p.m.**

NEW SCORING CRITERIA! Projects that address recovery efforts related to tornado damage from storms on July 15 and 16, 2024, will be considered with scoring emphasis. This will make projects related to tornado damage recovery more competitive in this grant cycle.

For greater detail on this initiative – including eligibility requirements, information on how to apply, and sample document language, visit www.esd.ny.gov/restore-new-york. Contact your ESD [regional office](#) for detailed program information. For questions and help with grant writing, please contact the NYS Tug Hill Commission office at (315) 785-2380, or email jennifer@tughill.org.

Comment Period Open for Jefferson County FEMA Flood Risk Review

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Region 2 office shared draft results from their flood risk study for Jefferson County on Thursday, September 30, at the town of LeRay office building. Digital work maps were presented for several towns and villages based on initial engineering data showing where water will collect and flow during a flood, based on current conditions. The draft flood hazard areas were mapped using topographic data, aerial imagery, surveys, and field reconnaissance, and hydrologic analyses were completed as well. The map shows special flood hazard areas and other areas of flood hazard and can be found on the FEMA Region 2 Draft Flood Hazard Viewer (tinyurl.com/FEMA-Flood-Hazard-Viewer). <https://tinyurl.com/FEMA-Flood-Hazard-Viewer>.

FEMA's 30-day comment period opened September 30 and is accepting comments through the Draft Flood Hazard Viewer. Use the link above if you would like to submit a comment based on where the draft zones have been mapped. To submit a comment, open the link and select "Community Comments" on the right side of the screen. You can then draw where you would like FEMA to consider including the flood hazard zone. Contact J. Trevor Cone, FEMA Senior Engineer, at john.cone@fema.dhs.gov, 771-217-6704 with any questions.

Tug Hill Traffic Safety Coordinator Funded

The Tug Hill Commission has received a second year of funding through the Governor's Traffic Safety Committee (GTSC) to continue supporting the traffic safety coordinator (TSC) position. This program has been instrumental in assisting local communities by relaying concerns and information to the NYS Department of Transportation (NYSDOT), producing traffic safety reports, and addressing issues like Amish buggy crashes across the four-county region.

Additionally, the program has provided valuable traffic safety education through local presentations at high school events, driver education classes, and safety campaigns. With the renewed funding, the program will continue to operate throughout the federal fiscal year, from October 1, 2024, to September 30, 2025. Please contact Chris Barboza, planner at the commission, for more information, chris@tughill.org. He will continue to serve as the TSC for the foreseeable future in addition to his planning work.

The 25th Annual Salmon River Fish Hatchery Open House was a Catch!

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation hosted the annual Salmon River Fish Hatchery Open House on Saturday, September 28 in Altmar. They provided tours to hundreds of people to showcase the hatchery's behind-the-scenes work of raising and caring for its fish populations. Guests could observe the hatchery's indoor aquaria, ask questions to specialists, and view migrating salmon. The hatchery raises steelhead, chinook salmon, and coho salmon and stocks about 3.5 million to over 100 public waters including Lake Ontario. Several organizations tabled and shared information about their work in the area as well. The hatchery is open to the public from April 1 through November 30, weather permitting, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. daily.

Ambulance Bills Signed into Law

Two state bills that should help rescue squads and their patients were signed into law by Governor Hochul last month. The first (S08486-C/A09102-C) authorizes Medicaid reimbursement to emergency medical service (EMS) agencies for providing emergency medical to Medicaid enrollees without requiring the transportation of these patients from the location where the medical care was administered, and when transporting them to alternative destinations other than a hospital, such as an urgent care clinic or mental health facility.

From the bill's justification: "Under current law, when responding to a 911 call, EMS agencies must transport Medicaid enrollees to a general hospital in order to receive Medicaid reimbursement. Each medical scenario is unique. Not every call requires a visit to a hospital or emergency room. In some cases, a patient may be better served at the scene of the emergency, and in these instances the EMS agency is faced with not being reimbursed for the cost of care (let alone the cost of the time it takes to respond in more rural or remote areas). This contributes to the already dire financial situations that many EMS providers already experience."

The second bill, S06226-A/A05789-A, permits ambulance services and advanced life support first response services that provide transportation by motor vehicle to store and distribute blood and initiate and administer blood transfusions, as currently authorized for ambulance services that provide transportation by aircraft.

DEC Winter Rock Salt Use Online Survey

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation is encouraging the general public to consider an online survey aimed at helping better understand how the overuse of rock salt can potentially impact the environment and health of New Yorkers. Although applying rock salt on roadways, parking lots, and sidewalks helps to ensure the safety of those traveling by vehicle or foot, overuse of salt may degrade infrastructure and contaminate runoff that enters streams and waterbodies.

In 2023, the Adirondack Road Salt Reduction Task Force completed a comprehensive review of rock salt contamination and road salt application best management practices within the Adirondack Park. The findings and recommendations of the task force, while originally focused on the Adirondacks, are applicable statewide.

The survey helps fulfill one of the task force report's recommendations to develop a public education and outreach campaign that encourages New Yorkers to manage rock salt use effectively and safely. Survey responses can help DEC better understand perceptions surrounding rock salt usage and make appropriate recommendations for reduction strategies that can be applied throughout New York.

The [public can submit feedback](#). The survey can be filled out on a smartphone, tablet, or computer and will remain open until November 1, 2024. For [additional information and resources](#), visit DEC's Rock Salt Reduction webpage.

Lead Service Line Inventory Reminder: Due October 16

As required by the federal Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) and New York State Public Health Law (PHL) § 1114-b, every public water system that is a federally defined Community Water System or a Nontransient Non-Community Water System must develop an initial service line material inventory and submit those findings to the state by **Wednesday, October 16**. The Lead Service Line Inventory (LSLI) must include all service lines, regardless of ownership, and make this inventory available to the public. Inventories and summary forms will be available at health.data.ny.gov within 120 days of the receipt.

Refer to *New York State Guidance for Complying with Lead and Copper Rule Revisions* for more information about the inventory.

For detailed instructions on how to submit your LSLI, view the New York State Department of Health's resource [here](#).

October Events with Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust

Enjoy the fall weather and go outdoors with Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust! Information for all events can be found at tughilltomorrowlandtrust.org/events/. Reservations are requested for most events.

Old Growth Forest Hike, Saturday, October 12, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

THTLT will join naturalist and outdoorsman Zach Wakeman as he leads this off-trail hike alongside trees over one hundred years old in one of the most remote, beautiful old-growth forests on Tug Hill. This hike will be over moderately difficult terrain inside land designated as New York State Forest Preserve. This event is free and open to the public. Registration is required.

Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Walk and Talk, Wednesday, October 30, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Join THTLT and the St. Lawrence-Lake Ontario Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management for the first of the season's guided walks and tree surveys at Tug Hill State Forest/Inman Gulf (25841 NYS Route 177, Rodman, NY). Learn to recognize and report Hemlock Woolly Adelgid HWA (or the lack thereof) – an invasive insect that kills hemlock trees. This event is free and registration is required.



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