

## Commission Presents at Association of Towns Conference

Commission executive director Katie Malinowski and Cooperative Tug Hill Council circuit rider Angie Kimball traveled to New York City last week to present at and attend the Association of Towns' annual conference. Katie and Angie presented three sessions: *Councils of Governments Model: A Unique Way to Share Services*; *Ambulance Service in Rural NYS*; and *Agrivoltaics: Co-Locating Solar and Agriculture*. All three presentations are available at [tughill.org/services/training/](http://tughill.org/services/training/).

The *Councils of Governments* presentation described the commission's circuit rider program, as well as the evolution from cooperative planning boards focused on land use, to the current council of government model. Examples of ways the five Tug Hill councils work together included cooperative zoning boards, websites, justice courts, infrastructure mapping, economic development, and more.

The *Ambulance Service* presentation provided background on emergency services in New York, as well as described challenges including volunteer and staffing changes, a dysfunctional funding model, and increasing costs and training requirements. Examples of how emergency medical services are being provided from around the Tug Hill region were provided. This session was the highest attended of the three and generated much discussion during and after the presentation.

The *Agrivoltaics* session gave an overview of solar development in the state and introduced attendees to the concept of co-locating solar and agricultural production in a way that puts the farmers' needs first. Good dialogue occurred between attendees, who were a mix of state agencies, developers, farmers, and municipal officials.

Presenting at this well-attended statewide conference for towns was a great opportunity for the Tug Hill Commission to fulfill one of its legislative charges, "to stimulate action by public and private organizations on region wide issues, problems and opportunities that affect the Tug Hill region, with primary emphasis on possible solutions at the local level and with attention to the ways in which information developed and experienced gained in the Tug Hill region may be usefully shared elsewhere in NYS."



Angie Kimball outlines municipal options for providing EMS.



Attendees at the ambulance service workshop.

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## New Municipal Website Requirements

General Municipal Law (GML) § 300 is a new law pertaining to municipal websites. It currently requires all municipal corporations to maintain an official website with a ".gov" domain name. It also states that the official website shall contain basic information on the municipality including, but not limited to, hours of operations, elected officials, and services provided. The website shall also contain a privacy policy and several other items. The new law currently has an effective date of June 19, 2025.

Bill S783/A3923 has been introduced that would revise GML § 300 to make it applicable only to municipalities of a population of 1,500 or higher as of the latest preceding decennial federal census and delay the effective date until one year after the enactment of the law. Information about how to secure a .gov domain is available at [get.gov/domains/](http://get.gov/domains/).

# 2024-25 Winter Snowfall Totals to Date

After several years of lighter winters, the Tug Hill region is experiencing a heavier winter season. The timing of heavy snowfall events and the lack of a thaw have contributed to many structure failures, primarily where lake-effect bands hit in Oswego and Oneida counties. The graphic below includes some important information to keep in mind as we head toward spring.

The Northeast Data Climate Center at Cornell University provides a one-stop resource for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) weather data. Below is a quick snapshot of their snowfall data since November 1 for sites in the four-county Tug Hill region that had consistent data.

Data for November 1, 2024	
Name	Total Snowfall (inches)
<b>Jefferson County</b>	
Watertown 0.9 SSW	112
Black River	118.4
<b>Lewis County</b>	
Chases Lake	111.5
Highmarket 2W	238.9
Hooker 12 NNW*	314.4
Lowville	159.6
<b>Oneida County</b>	
Boonville 4 SSW	223.7
<b>Oswego County</b>	
Lacona 3.6 SSE	145.2
Mexico 2SW	205
Minetto 0.1 SE	189.4
Oswego	97.7

\*This site is between Copenhagen and Barnes Corners.

The data in the table are collected from available monitoring locations in and around the Tug Hill region. Anyone can access this data by going to the [Northeast Data Climate Center](#). One option is to click "[NOWData](#)," select the National Weather Service station of interest, choose "daily data for a month" under product, select the month and year of interest, and click "view." Alternatively, click "[CLIMOD 2 Data Access](#)," select single-station or multi-station data, and explore options for products. If you have any questions about finding data, contact Jillian at [jillian@tughill.org](mailto:jillian@tughill.org) or 315-785-2406.



## KNOW YOUR SNOW LOAD

Heavy snowfall can cause serious damage to buildings, roofs, and other structures. Stay prepared and take action to prevent costly repairs or dangerous collapses.

**Know Your Roof's Capacity** - Every structure has a limit. Make sure your building is designed to handle the expected snow load in your area.

**Monitor Snow Accumulation** - Wet, heavy snow adds significant weight. Ice buildup can make it even worse. Lake effect snow can be heavier than a regular snow.

**Look for Warning Signs** - Creaking noises, sagging roofs, or doors and windows that suddenly stick could indicate excessive load.

**Prevent Ice Dams** - Keep gutters clear and ensure proper insulation to avoid dangerous ice buildup.

**Who Should Be Concerned?**

- 🏠 Homeowners
- 🏢 Business Owners
- 🔧 Contractors
- 🏛️ Municipalities

Stay safe and proactive! Reach out to your Code Enforcement Officer for more information about your local codes

## Commission Board Meeting

Monday, March 17 at 10:00 a.m. at the Town of Harrisburg town office, 7886 Cobb Rd., Harrisburg, NY.

The public is welcome to attend.



# Boonville Survey Closing on March 15

The town and village of Boonville are currently undergoing a comprehensive plan update and as part of the update, the municipalities are conducting a townwide survey. Postcards have been mailed to residents and property owners in the town and village to encourage public participation by explaining what a comprehensive plan is, and how to take the survey. The survey is available online by going to [www.surveymonkey.com/r/Boonville](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Boonville) and paper copies are available by calling the town or village clerk at (315) 338-2880. Completed paper surveys can be dropped off at the village drop box or Erwin Library. The survey is scheduled to close at the end of the day on Saturday, March 15.

# RACOG Economic Visioning Summit April 30

Join the River Area Council of Governments (RACOG) for its 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Economic Visioning Summit, being held at the Jefferson-Lewis BOCES Howard G. Sackett Technical Center on April 30 from 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

This free event is open to the public and includes lunch and features presentations on a variety of topics, including local events, transportation safety, municipal-oriented educational programs, grant preparation, and local government updates from RACOG municipalities, Jefferson County Planning, and Lewis County Planning. Economic development updates will be provided by Naturally Lewis and the Jefferson County Industrial Development Agency. Participants will also engage in a team game during the day.



Register today at [tinyurl.com/racogeconomicsummit2025](http://tinyurl.com/racogeconomicsummit2025). For questions or more information, please contact Mickey Dietrich, RACOG Circuit Rider, at [mickey@tughill.org](mailto:mickey@tughill.org) or (315) 681-5023.

# Port Leyden Park Revitalization Project Funded

For over a year, the village of Port Leyden has been working diligently to secure support for a revitalization project of its community park. The Port Leyden Village Park serves as a focal point of the village with playground equipment, basketball courts, softball and baseball fields, a concession stand, and wide-open space for play. To enhance the park's existing strengths and tie everything together, the village's revitalization plan has two main components: park beautification and landscaping, and the construction of an Adirondack-style pavilion over a segment of the original concrete footprint of the field day buildings.



In the summer of 2024, the village was awarded funding from Lewis County's Community Connections Program, accounting for half of the quoted project cost. Earlier this month, the village experienced yet another triumph in closing the funding gap and making the full implementation of the revitalization plan possible. The commission worked directly with Port Leyden to develop a grant application to Pratt Northam Foundation, a private foundation aiming to improve quality of life initiatives in the Black River Valley from Boonville to Carthage. Through their community grants program, the village secured an additional \$30,000 to fund the project in full.

Congratulations to Port Leyden on their exciting new project, and thanks to funding partners Lewis County and the Pratt Northam Foundation.

# Albion Comprehensive Plan SWOT

The Albion comprehensive plan committee held a "Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats" (SWOT) session on February 13, as part of their comprehensive plan update. The session, led by Tug Hill staff Christopher Barboza, Maria Covey, and Heidi Tompkins, solicited input from planning board members, town board members, and local residents. About 15 town residents (including board members) attended the session and provided valuable input.

A SWOT is a type of visioning exercise which helps gather thoughts and opinions about the town's future. All comments will be compiled into a summary for the planning committee to review. Any relevant questions or concerns heard at the SWOT will be incorporated into a community survey to be sent out in the coming weeks.

# DOL Public Work Contractor Registry

All contractors and subcontractors submitting bids or performing construction work on public work projects or private projects covered by [Article 8 of the Labor Law](#) are required to register with the NYS Department of Labor (DOL) under [Labor Law Section 220-i](#).

Contractors and subcontractors need to register before submitting any new bids or commencing new work on a covered project on or after December 30, 2024. DOL encourages all contractors and subcontractors to register as soon as possible to obtain a Certificate of Registration to avoid negatively impacting a bidding period or project schedule. For more information visit the NYSDOL website, [here](#).

Municipalities should confirm that any contractors or subcontractors performing construction work for their town or village are registered. By actively verifying compliance, potential issues can be avoided. Most contractors are already registered, so it is simply a matter of the boards checking during the bidding process or requiring proof of registration in the original bid requests. To search the registry, click [here](#).

## 2025-2026 Records Management Grants Due March 31

The New York State Archives has announced that they are now accepting applications for the 2025-2026 Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF) grant cycle. The LGRMIF provides grants to local governments. These grants assist local governments to establish records management programs or develop new program components. It is a competitive program awarding grants based on the merits of applications. Individual grant applications are available for up to \$75,000 and shared service applications can request up to \$150,000.

If you plan to apply for an LGRMIF grant, your Records Management Officer (RMO) must have a NYS Directory Service account by **March 17, 2025**. If you do not have a NYSDS account, please complete the [online registration form](#).

The 2025-2026 application due date will be **March 31, 2025, at 5:00 p.m.** For more information, and to access the guidelines, please visit the [LGRMIF webpage](#). Interested applicants can also see the [2025-2026 RFP Application Guidelines](#), visit the Archives webpage at [www.archives.nysed.gov/workshops/webinars](http://www.archives.nysed.gov/workshops/webinars) for a variety of recorded webinar options or view the [LGRMIF Grants Kickoff Meeting](#) recording. Contact New York State Archives with questions at [archgrants@nysed.gov](mailto:archgrants@nysed.gov), (518) 474-6926.

## EFC Green Innovation and Wastewater Grants Due April 11

New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) recently announced the application period is open for the Green Innovation Grant and Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering Planning Grant programs. EFC's grants help ensure communities can affordably undertake vital projects that safeguard public health, protect the environment, and support economic development while minimizing the financial burden for local ratepayers. Grant applications and required supporting documentation must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, April 11.

Up to \$15 million in funding is available under the [Green Innovation Grant Program](#) to support projects across the state that utilize green stormwater infrastructure design and create cutting-edge green technologies. Competitive grants of up to \$3 million are available to help fund projects that improve water quality and utilize green practices such as green stormwater infrastructure, energy efficiency, water efficiency, and environmental innovation to improve resiliency for protection of existing systems. A grant webinar was held on February 26, and a recording should be available soon.

The [Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering Planning Grants](#) is offering up to \$3 million in grants to help eligible communities afford and start the critical planning process, so they can be better prepared to seek grants and financing through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund to complete vital clean water infrastructure projects. The goal of the program is to encourage communities to advance water quality projects to the design stage, and ultimately construction, by funding the development of an acceptable engineering report. Grants of up to \$100,000 are available to eligible municipalities. A grant webinar was held on February 26, and a recording should be available soon.



TUG HILL WINTER WILDLIFE WEBINAR SERIES








# AMERICAN CHESTNUT RESEARCH AND RESTORATION PROJECT

**Wednesday, March 12, 6PM**

Join us for an exciting webinar with Dakota Matthews, molecular lab manager for the American Chestnut Research and Restoration Project at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, as we explore efforts to restore this iconic American tree.

Learn about:

-  The ecological and economic importance of the American chestnut
-  The history of its decline due to blight and its impact on forests
-  Breakthroughs in genetic research and the development of blight-resistant transgenic chestnut trees
-  Updates on the breeding program and field trials
-  Time for questions and discussion after the presentation

Don't miss this opportunity to learn about cutting-edge conservation science and the future of the American chestnut!

**DAKOTA MATTHEWS**

Molecular Biology Lab Manager  
American Chestnut Research &  
Restoration Project  
SUNY ESF



**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION: [TINYURL.COM/TUGHILLCHESTNUT](https://tinyurl.com/tughillchestnut)**



# Small Wastewater Systems Funding Webinar March 18

Small and rural water systems face unique challenges in managing wastewater and stormwater. Join the Environmental Finance Center Network and their partners on March 18 from 1:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. as they present a no cost webinar that highlights the resources communities are using to address these challenges. The session will touch upon many topics, such as technical assistance, supporting system need evaluation, project development, and capacity-building, as well as accessing funding and financing to pay for system improvements. Six panelists will provide an overview of available programs, share stories from participating communities and utilities, and provide insight on the process of applying for funds from an applicant's perspective. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

## NYS Town Clerk's Association Conference April 27-30

The NYSTCA 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference will be held April 27-30 at the Marriott Downtown Syracuse. The conference is designed specifically for the education and professional development of town clerks and their deputies, with a goal of helping each clerk succeed in their position and in their municipality, armed with up-to-date information and well equipped for their many daily tasks.



NEW YORK STATE  
**TOWN CLERKS  
ASSOCIATION**

There will be sessions with frequently contacted state agencies, topical speakers during breakout sessions, vendor specialty classes, and one-of-a-kind offerings. There will be classes for new clerks as well as seasoned clerks. For more information, visit [nystca.com](http://nystca.com), or click [here](#) to register. Registration deadline is April 16.

## DEC's School Seedling Program Application Open

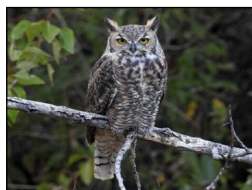
Schools and youth education organizations across New York are invited to apply for 25 free seedlings through the [School Seedling Program](#) until March 28 to plant with students. The program's goal is to help instill a sense of environmental stewardship among New York's youth and set a foundation that will allow students to make informed decisions about the use of natural resources. The program is a tool for educators to use in meeting the Next Generation Science Standards as it provides a hands-on opportunity to learn about natural systems and the valuable role of trees while building awareness of conservation issues.

Seedlings are two to three years old, approximately four to 12 inches tall, and bare root. Four species are available – jack pine, red oak, river birch, or speckled alder – and each school or organization may only receive one group of seedlings per year. Seedlings will be shipped by FedEx in May only. For assistance or questions, contact the Colonel William F. Fox Memorial Saratoga Tree Nursery at [nysnursery@dec.ny.gov](mailto:nysnursery@dec.ny.gov) or 518-581-1439.

## Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust Events

**Blake Sanctuary Owl Prowl and Twilight Walk**, March 14, 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Enjoy a twilight walk and owl prowling in the woods with Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust (THTLT) at the Joseph A. Blake Wildlife Sanctuary (31241 Middle Road, Watertown, NY), located in the town of Rutland. Learn about the ways animals are adapted to a low-light lifestyle, look for all types of animal tracks and signs, and look and listen for owls! This is the third in a series of owl prowling twilight walks for 2025. [Register here](#).



**March 2025 Tug Hill Book and Beverage Club**, March 27, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Join THTLT as they host their first Book and Beverage Club gathering to discuss two books about owls! The books they are reading for March 27th are Hoot by Carl Hiaasen and What an Owl Knows by Jennifer Ackerman. Readers can choose one of these titles or read both. An in-person meeting location will be announced in early March, sent by email to all registered attendees, and posted on their Facebook and Instagram pages. [Register here](#).

### 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](mailto:tughill@tughill.org)

Visit us at:

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To request our newsletter electronically please email [gwen@tughill.org](mailto:gwen@tughill.org).

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