

Renewable Energy Land Use Training Underway

The Land Use Law Center at Pace University recently held the first two days of their Land Use Leadership Alliance training program in Watertown. Local leaders from across northern New York gathered to learn from a variety of professionals involved in the renewable energy field, with a specific focus on solar energy. The Tug Hill Commission's planning director, Matt Johnson, spoke to the group on the first day about the community benefit of having zoning regulations in place for solar facilities. Tug Hill Commission secretary and co-chairman of the Town of Watertown Planning Board, Tom Boxberger, also gave valuable insight into the steps communities take to create comprehensive plans and zoning laws with renewable energy development in mind.

On the second day, attendees were given the opportunity to tour an agrivoltaic facility located in New Bremen, Lewis County. They heard from Clear Path Energy, the developer of the site, as well as the farmer Myron Zehr, who has been able to continue farming operations including harvesting hay within the panel array. The final day of the training will take place on June 23 to continue expanding upon a variety of topics related to solar development in local communities.



Spacing between rows of solar panels allows for three passes of the tractor.



One of two fields where solar panels are installed on the Zehr farm.

Agrivoltaics Webinar July 9

Join American Farmland Trust and the Tug Hill Commission for a wrap-up webinar on our Advancing Agrivoltaics in NY project. After a short "agrivoltaics 101," participants will be given an overview of what was heard in the February and March roundtables held in Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, and Oswego counties, as well as additional one-on-one interviews. The webinar will focus on several overarching themes, including challenges to farming, integrating solar and agriculture, and barriers, gaps and opportunities to advance agrivoltaics in NY. There will be time for questions and answers.

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Register [here](#) for the Wednesday, July 9, 2025, 7:00 p.m. Zoom webinar.



WEBINAR: ADVANCING AGRIVOLTAICS IN NEW YORK

July 9, 2025 at 7:00 P.M. ET



American Farmland Trust
SAVING THE LAND THAT SUSTAINS US

Staff Outing at Murray Educational Center

Tug Hill Commission staff held their monthly staff meeting at the Development Authority of the North Country's [Murray Educational Center](#) in Rodman in June. The facility is named for former Development Authority board member and chairman, Doug Murray. Doug was a prominent area farmer and involved in many organizations, including the Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust.

The nature trail at the center has two loops totaling 1.6 miles which highlight the agricultural nature of the property surrounding the solid waste management facility. The Murray Trail is available for year-round, non-motorized recreational use. It is accessible from a parking area one quarter mile north of the solid waste management facility's main entrance on Route 177 in the Town of Rodman.



Left to right: Commission staffers Maria Covey, Jennifer Harvill, Patrick Brady, Gwen Decker, Chris Barboza, Felicia Passino, John Healt, Katie Malinowski and Jillian Lee.

SRCG Summer Meeting June 25



The Salmon Rivers Council of Governments will hold its summer meeting on Wednesday, June 25, at 6:30 p.m. at the Parish Town/Village Hall. Municipal representatives who are unable to attend are asked to notify Heidi Tompkins in advance at heidi@tughill.org.

NorCOG Summer Meeting June 26



The North Shore Council of Governments will hold its summer meeting on Thursday, June 26, at 7:00 p.m. at the Constantia Town Hall. New York State Senator Christopher Ryan will be in attendance to speak with local officials and share updates relevant to the area. Municipal representatives who are unable to attend are asked to contact Heidi Tompkins in advance at heidi@tughill.org.

Upstate Upgrade Meeting Held in Albion

Representatives from National Grid held an open house at the Albion Municipal Building on June 12 for the public to learn more about the Black River – Clay and South Oswego – Tar Hill transmission line upgrades. Attendees browsed displays and detailed mapping, with representatives on hand to answer questions.

Three additional meetings are planned: for the Black River-Clay line: **Tuesday, July 15, at 6:00 p.m.**, virtual, the Zoom link will be on National Grid's [website](#) closer to the event date.; **Thursday, July 17, 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**, in-person at the Paul V. Moore High School, 44 School Dr., Central Square; **Tuesday, July 22, 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.**, in-person at the Black River Municipal Building, 107 Jefferson Place, Black River.

Emergency Response Planning for Sugar Maple Solar Project

On June 16, AES Clean Energy met with town representatives and the fire departments of Croghan and Wilna to review the emergency response plan for the proposed Sugar Maple Solar project, with a focus on the battery storage component. The group engaged in productive discussions around safety protocols and response measures. AES shared that the battery enclosures will be equipped with heat, smoke, and gas detection systems, as well as a clean-agent fire suppression system designed to prevent thermal runaway propagation. Plans and procedures were outlined to support first responders in the event of an incident.

More information on the 125 megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic electric generating facility with a 20 MW battery storage component is available [here](#). The project is going through the Public Service Law Article VIII [permitting process](#).

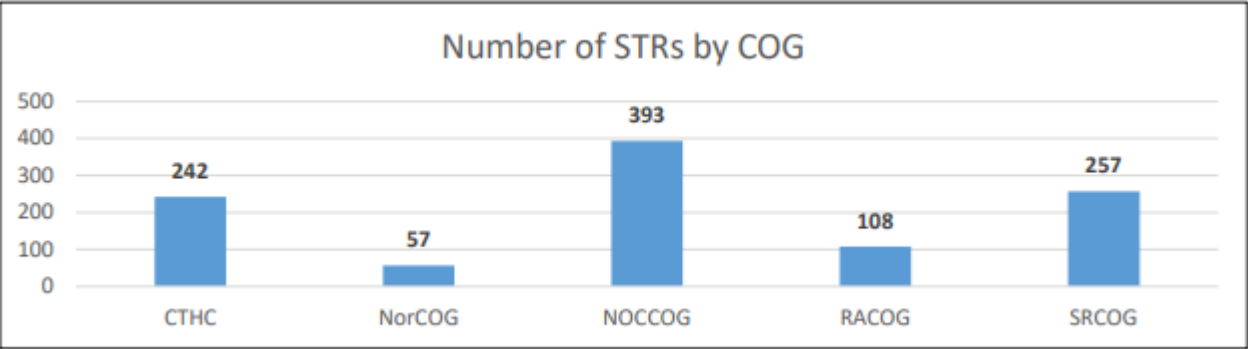
Counties Move to Regulate Short-Term Rentals

As short-term rentals (STRs) continue to grow in popularity across the Tug Hill region, more counties are adopting local laws to track and regulate them. These laws often include registration requirements, safety standards, and occupancy tax collection, aimed at improving transparency, protecting housing availability, and ensuring that hosts operate responsibly.

With the passage of NYS’s new STR law (Article 12-D of the Real Property Law), counties are now required to establish a registration system or formally opt out by the end of 2025. For example, Oswego County just passed a law creating a county-wide short-term rental registry this month. To learn more about short-term rental requirements in your area, visit your county’s official website.

For a deeper dive into the impacts, regulations, and legal considerations surrounding STRs, check out the Tug Hill Commission’s **updated Short-Term Rental Issue Paper** available [here](#), and excerpted below.

Number of STRs by COG



The concentration of STRs varies across the five councils of governments (COGs). This variation reflects differences in the number of housing units, housing market pressures, tourism demand, and local laws and regulations. The following summarizes the intensity of STRs, defined as the proportion of housing units used as STRs, in each COG.

- **CTHC:** About one in every 90 housing units is used as a STR.
- **NorCOG:** STRs account for approximately one in every 96 housing units.
- **NOCCOG:** This COG has the highest STR concentration, with about 1 one in every 25 housing units operating as a STR.
- **RACOG:** Around one in every 47 housing units is designated as a STR.
- **SRCOG:** STRs represent about 1one in every 43 housing units in this area.

Budget & Accounting Technical Assistance Continues

The commission has extended its contract with Laird Petrie 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.

Examples of services Mr. Petrie 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 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 for 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.

Interested municipalities should contact their circuit rider to request assistance.

Green Resiliency Grants Due August 15

The NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) is accepting applications for to its [Green Resiliency Grant](#) (GRG) program. These grants are awarded on a competitive basis to transformative projects that enhance the resilience of stormwater infrastructure across NY. Eligible projects must utilize green infrastructure stormwater management practices and/or nature-based solutions to manage combined and/or sanitary sewer overflows and/or mitigate risks associated with extreme weather events. Projects must not begin construction before notification of award and must commence construction no later than July 1, 2027. GRG may fund up to 90 percent of eligible project costs with grants ranging from \$1 million to \$10 million per project.

EFC held a webinar on May 21 to share information about this round and how to apply. A recording on YouTube is available [here](#).

NY BRICKS Grants for Community Centers Due August 15

The [NY Building Recreational Infrastructure for Communities, Kids and Seniors](#) (BRICKS) is a new program that supports municipalities and nonprofit organizations in building or renovating community centers that promote physical health, mental well-being, and community connections for youth and older adults. NY BRICKS will offer grants to fund design, construction, renovation, and land acquisition for these centers. Priority will be given to projects in underserved communities, as well as those offering affordable services like childcare, eldercare, and mental health counseling. The program aims to make transformative, high-impact investments in local communities. BRICKS offers grants between \$250,000 and \$15 million to acquire, design, construct or reconstruct facilities, provide major renovations, improvements, and modernization or rehabilitation of community centers. NY BRICKS grants will require applicants to provide a 20 percent matching contribution towards the overall project cost.

The application period for the NY BRICKS capital grant program will open on July 14, 2025 and applications must be submitted by August 15, 2025.

Census Webinar Materials Available

The commission recently hosted Dr. Amy Brombos from the U.S. Census Bureau for a very engaging and informative webinar on how to access the large amounts of census data available on-line. The entire webinar can be viewed [here](#), and the presentation slides are available on the commission website [here](#).

Useful links demonstrated by Dr. Brombos include:

<https://data.census.gov/>

<https://www.census.gov/data/academy.html>

<https://censusreporter.org/>

Oswego County CFA Workshop June 26

Operation Oswego County is hosting a public session on Thursday, June 26 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Cayuga Community College Event Center in Fulton. The workshop will be focused on municipal funding opportunities available through the 2025 Consolidated Funding Application process.

The session will be led by Dan Kolinski, regional director of Empire State Development, and will offer a broad overview of programs supporting public infrastructure, housing, and community development. With hundreds of millions of dollars in funding available through the CFA process, this is a timely opportunity to explore how your municipality can tap into these resources to support economic growth and regional readiness.

Please RSVP by June 24 to Alexandra Fitzpatrick at afitzpatrick@oswegocounty.org. Feel free to reach out with any questions in advance.

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