



315-785-2380 / 2570

315-785-2574 (fax)

Dulles State Office Building
317 Washington Street
Watertown, New York 13601-3782

e-mail: tughill@tughill.org

website: www.tughill.org

Chair

Geraldine J. Ritter

Vice Chair

William W. Scriber

Secretary

Thomas E. Boxberger

Members

Jan J. Bogdanowicz
Leona M. Cheresnoski
Robert K. Keller
Fred Munk
Michael G. Yerdon, Sr.

Executive Director

Katie Malinowski

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 10, 2025

CONTACT: Katie Malinowski, Executive Director
(315) 778-4193, katie@tughill.org

Agricultural Economic Development and Dairy Expansion Focus of Tug Hill Commission Annual Dinner

WATERTOWN, NEW YORK – Over 140 local, county, and state officials, as well as partners from organizations across the Tug Hill region, attended the Tug Hill Commission’s annual dinner on October 9 at the Delta Lake Inn near Rome. The primary focus of the dinner was to learn more about agricultural economic development and dairy expansion in upstate New York, in addition to a year-in-review by the Tug Hill Commission. The commission was also presented with a letter of appreciation from Governor Hochul for its work with Tug Hill communities.

Katie Malinowski, Tug Hill Commission Executive Director, commented that “Agriculture, and particularly dairy, is a large part of the landscape and economy of rural New York State, including Tug Hill. Bringing together industry experts with Tug Hill communities creates an opportunity for learning and dialogue to help support growth in farming and related jobs.”

New York State Agriculture Deputy Commissioner Katie Howard said, “New York is home to a world class dairy industry that serves as a crucial economic engine for our state. Our dairy farmers and processors are second to none when it comes to the care they give to the land and their animals and the quality of their milk products. I thank the Tug Hill Commission for putting together this opportunity for industry experts to share the value of their work with their community members and leaders.”

According to Allyson Jones-Brimmer, Executive Director of the Northeast Dairy Producers Association, “The level of interest in economic development happening in New York, particularly relating to dairy production, is truly incredible. By working together with partners from throughout the industry, in local, state and federal government and beyond, we can position our family dairy farms to be successful as they work to support the processors who have chosen New York as their home.”

Helping local governments and citizens shape the future of the Tug Hill region.

“This growth and investment in dairy processing is unprecedented in New York. We need to make sure that our dairy farmers benefit in order to take full economic advantage of these opportunities” added Tom Overton, Program Director at Cornell PRO-DAIRY.

Max Finberg, Vice President for Government Affairs at Chobani, LLC. said, “At Chobani, we’re proud to call Upstate New York home and to be part of the state’s thriving dairy ecosystem that drives growth and opportunity for so many. This expansion is more than an investment in our future—it’s a commitment to supporting local farmers, strengthening our communities, and advancing our mission of bringing good food for all.”

Additionally, the commission reported on many projects and activities over the past year. With newly elected officers and a newly adopted strategic plan, the commission continues to respond to local and regional needs through land use assistance, grant applications, councils of government initiatives, training, and regional efforts. The year-in-review presentation is available on the commission’s website at tughill.org/.

###

The New York State Tug Hill Commission is a non-regulatory state agency charged with helping local governments, organizations, and citizens shape the future of the region, especially its environment and economy. The commission uses a grassroots approach to build local capacity and provide technical assistance in land use planning, community development, and natural resource management.



Caption for photo, left to right: Tug Hill Commission Chairperson Gerry Ritter, Northeast Dairy Producers Association Executive Director Allyson Jones-Brimmer, Chobani’s Vice President for Government Affairs Max Finberg, NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Deputy Commissioner Katie Howard, Cornell PRO-DAIRY Program Director Tom Overton, and Tug Hill Commission Executive Director Katie Malinowski.