

2025 MetroCount Field Season Summary Now Available

The Tug Hill Commission is pleased to announce that the *2025 MetroCount Field Season Data Summary* is now available. This annual report highlights the results of traffic data collection efforts conducted across the Tug Hill region. During the 2025 season, traffic counter systems were deployed at 40 locations between May and November, gathering valuable information on vehicle counts, speeds, and classifications. These data provide insight into local travel behavior, roadway usage, and vehicle types, helping municipalities make informed decisions about roadway maintenance, traffic safety, and infrastructure planning. The full report is available on the commission's [website](#) where users can also explore site-specific data using the interactive map.



The summary includes:

- A list and map of all 2025 surveyed locations across the region.
- Vehicle count data, including average daily traffic estimates (AADT).
- Speed analyses, featuring average and 85th percentile speeds.
- Vehicle classification data following Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) standards.
- Applications of traffic data for planning, safety improvements, and grant opportunities.

2026 Local Government Conference Update

The **2026 Local Government Conference** is shaping up to be one of our best yet! Mark your calendars for Monday, April 20 and Tuesday, April 21, 2026, at Turning Stone Conference Center, and get ready for a day packed with insight and innovation.

What's New?

We are putting the final touches on an incredible lineup of training sessions, and are excited about the presenters who have stepped up to share their expertise with you. Whether you're a seasoned official or just getting started, there's something here for everyone.

Choose Your Own Learning Adventure

While sessions for the full day, April 21, are organized by role — Town & Village Boards, Planning Boards, Zoning Boards of Appeals, and Clerks — you're welcome to attend any session that sparks your interest. Plus, we've included two crossover tracks designed to appeal to a broader audience with timely, relevant topics.

In This Issue

- 2025 MetroCount Summary
- 2026 Local Government Conference
- Non-Profit Bootcamp Session 3
December 4
- RAPID Act Regulations
- Nuclear Energy Forums
- ATV Recreation: Considerations for
Municipalities December 11
- 2025 TAP Grants
- Association of Towns Newly Elected
Training

Get Inspired

Our half-day focused session on Monday, April 20, will showcase nationally renowned planner, author, and professor Bill Fulton, who grew up in Central NY and is one of America's major thought leaders on land use, economic development, and planning. Whether it is Chobani, Micron, Fort Drum or another large economic development project, this afternoon "Planning for Growth" session will motivate you and provide information to help make your community what you and your residents want it to be in the coming decades.

Stay in the Loop

Please have a look at our [session lineup](#), and check back often for updates. We'll also post other important announcements about things like our "[day before](#)" session and [registration information](#), once they become available. All of this and more can be found at tughill.org/localgovernmentconference/.

NON-PROFIT BOOTCAMP



Session #3

BUILDING BETTER NONPROFIT BOARDS

Strong boards are the backbone of successful nonprofits. This session is designed for anyone interested in nonprofit governance and will be especially useful for board members and chairs looking to bring practical knowledge back to their organizations. Participants will learn about key roles and responsibilities, including legal and fiduciary duties, officer roles, separating board and staff functions, and strategies for accountability.

DECEMBER 4, 2025

Thursday | 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

The Strand | 136 Franklin St, Watertown, NY 13601

TOPIC HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Legal & Fiduciary Responsibilities
- ✓ Officer Roles
- ✓ Board Accountability
- ✓ Best Practices

REGISTER



In-Person



Virtual



EXPERT

 **Sheena Soloman, Executive Director - The Gifford Foundation**

Sheena has served as Executive Director of The Gifford Foundation since 2019. She has played a key role in designing and planning Nourishing Tomorrow's Leaders, a leadership development program focused on increasing diversity and inclusiveness on nonprofit boards.



Northern New York
Community Foundation



RAPID Act Regulations Comments Due December 8

The NYS Office of Renewable Energy Siting and Electric Transmission (ORES) has issued a revised set of proposed regulations implementing the Renewable Action Through Project Interconnection and Deployment (RAPID) Act, which consolidated NY's renewable energy and electric transmission siting processes under a new Article VIII of the Public Service Law. More than 2,000 public comments were received on the first draft of these regulations. A second 45-day public comment period is now open. Stakeholders may submit written comments to ORES through the [Department of Public Service's Document and Matter Management \(DMM\) System](#) by December 8.

According to ORES, the revised rulemaking seeks to streamline the combined permitting framework while strengthening early stakeholder engagement and clarifying standards for project amendments and rights-of-way. ORES estimates that these revisions will reduce the timeframe for permit issuance by up to 50%.

Key areas addressed in the revised rulemaking include:

- revised pre-application procedures;
- revised alternative route scoping procedures for major electric transmission facilities;
- revised procedures for upgrades and new work for major electric transmission facilities located substantially within existing electric transmission rights-of-way;
- increased stakeholder engagement, including with local governments;
- replacement of "environmental justice" with "disadvantaged communities" and
- revisions to noise standards for both major renewable energy and major electric transmission facilities.

Nuclear Forums Explore Small Modular Reactors, Waste Recycling, and Regional Energy Needs

Clarkson University, Jefferson Community College, and Assemblyman Scott Gray hosted two nuclear energy forums last week. The forums brought together experts, local officials, and community members for a detailed look at the future of nuclear power in the region. Discussion focused mostly on small modular reactors (SMR) and microreactors, two technologies increasingly seen as potential contributors to NYS long-term energy strategy. The Watertown forum lasted two hours and can be viewed [here](#).

Presenters explained that SMRs are a new generation of smaller, factory-built nuclear reactors that rely on simplified designs and passive safety systems. These design features may allow them to operate on much smaller footprints and, in some cases, with significantly lower water requirements than today's reactors. SMRs may have the potential to be sited in a wider range of locations, including away from major rivers and lakes. While traditional nuclear plants use a 10-mile plume exposure zone and a 50-mile ingestion zone as part of their emergency planning, recent federal rule changes now allow advanced reactor developers to propose smaller emergency planning areas if supported by detailed safety analyses.

The forum also highlighted the connection between SMRs and high-demand industries such as semiconductor, hydrogen production, synthetic fuels, and data centers. Presenters emphasized that as energy-intensive industries continue to grow, stable baseload generation will become increasingly important for both upstate and statewide reliability. SMRs were presented as one possible tool to meet those needs in the coming decades.

Nuclear waste and recycling were also discussed, with a representative from Exodys outlining a proposal for what could become the first commercial nuclear fuel reprocessing facility in the US. He explained that much of the nation's spent nuclear fuel is currently stored onsite at existing power plants due to the lack of a permanent federal repository. Exodys' model aims to retrieve this fuel, reprocess it, and reuse it multiple times, potentially reducing long-term waste volumes and extending the usable energy.

During the question-and-answer portion, residents raised concerns about safety, tourism, job creation, community impacts, and whether electricity generated locally would be used in the region or transmitted elsewhere in the state. Presenters noted that many of these questions have no single answer at this stage because they depend on siting decisions, regulatory reviews, energy policy, and market conditions that have not yet been defined. They also emphasized that any proposed SMR project would undergo full federal and state environmental review, including robust public input, before any approvals could be granted.

The
NORTHERN ONEIDA COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
and the
NYS TUG HILL COMMISSION
present:

ATV RECREATION: CONSIDERATIONS FOR MUNICIPALITIES



**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11
7:00 PM**

BOONVILLE MUNICIPAL OFFICES
13149 STATE ROUTE 12, BOONVILLE, NY 13309

The Tug Hill Commission recently published *ATV Recreation: Considerations for Municipalities*. Taylor McKinney, project specialist at the Tug Hill Commission and primary author of the issue paper, will walk attendees through the content, including the impetus for writing the document, the approach taken to research local laws and relevant court cases, and best practices municipalities may want to consider when opening roads for ATV recreation in their town or village. There will be plenty of time for questions and answers. The paper can be downloaded from the commission's website at tughill.org/publications/technical-issue-papers/, or by contacting either your municipal advisor or the Tug Hill Commission for a hard copy.



**Register by
December 8**



Taylor McKinney, *Project Specialist*
NYS Tug Hill Commission



**For more information, or to register, contact:
John Healt, jhealt@tughill.org or 315-941-2818**

**THERE IS NO COST TO
ATTEND & REFRESHMENTS
WILL BE PROVIDED**



2025 TAP Grants Due March 12

\$97.4 million in new funding is available in the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) from the NYS Department of Transportation (DOT) through the Federal Highway Administration for active transportation-related projects and programs that support the advancement of healthy lifestyles across NY.

TAP funds a variety of transportation-related projects which increase options for non-vehicular transportation, including:

- Planning, design, and construction of infrastructure-related projects to improve non-driver safety and access to public transportation and enhanced mobility.
- Construction of turnouts, overlooks, and viewing areas.
- Safe routes to school (enables and encourages children to walk or bike to school).
- Planning, design, and construction of on-road and off-road facilities for non-motorized use.
- Conversion and use of abandoned railroad corridors for trails for non-motorized use.

The following entities are eligible for funding:

- Local Governments (Counties, Towns, Cities and Villages)
- Transit Agencies
- Natural Resource or Public Land Agencies
- Tribal Governments
- Local or Regional Governmental Transportation or Recreational Trail Entity
- Non-Governmental Organizations

Projects will be selected through a competitive solicitation process and rated based on established criteria that include public benefit, project type, eligible funding source, significance, cost-effectiveness, geographic balance, and alignment with NY's Climate Leadership & Community Protection Act. Projects must be related to the surface transportation system and provide full access to the public. The TAP project award shall be no less than \$500,000 and no greater than \$7.0 million for any single project.

NYS DOT will provide up to 80 percent of the total eligible project costs with a minimum 20 percent match provided by the project sponsor. Eligible project costs may include planning, design/engineering services, right-of-way acquisition, construction, and construction inspection. The application, program guidance, and workshop schedules are located at <https://www.dot.ny.gov/tap-cmaq>. Informational webinars, mandatory for all applicants, have been scheduled for:

Thursday, December 4, 2025, register [here](#). Monday, December 8, 2025, register [here](#).

Association of Towns Newly Elected Training January 2026

The NY Association of Towns (NYAOT) is holding their Newly Elected Town Officials (NETO) school in January at two locations – Albany and Corning. NETO is a comprehensive training program designed to help newly elected town officials start their term with confidence. Co-sponsored by the Office of the State Comptroller, this program provides essential guidance on topics such as budgeting, fiscal responsibilities, cash management, and retirement, offering practical insights for effective local governance. Tailored specifically for town supervisors, board members, highway superintendents, fiscal personnel, attorneys, and clerks, this training equips participants with the foundational knowledge needed to serve their communities successfully.

Registration costs \$250 for both members and non-members of NYOAT. Classes run all day Wednesday, Thursday, plus half-day Friday. All attendees are invited to the Wednesday evening welcome reception at each location, and the registration fee includes all class materials, breakfast, and lunch. Attendees must book their own hotel room reservation using the online booking link or calling the hotel reservation line.

To register, please click below on your chosen location to be taken to an online registration for that location. If you prefer to register offline, please click [here to download a paper registration form](#).

[Albany](#), January 14, 15 & 16, Albany Capital Center and [Corning](#), January 21, 22 & 23, Radisson Hotel Corning.

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

Visit us at:

Web: www.tughill.org

Facebook:
www.facebook.com/TugHillCommission

Instagram: [Instagram](#)

YouTube: [YouTube](#)

Sign up to receive our [newsletter](#) electronically.

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