



January 30, 2026

NYS TUG HILL COMMISSION | DULLES STATE OFFICE BUILDING | 317 WASHINGTON STREET | WATERTOWN NY 13601 (315) 785-2380 | www.tughill.org

REGISTER NOW - April 20 Planning For Growth Speakers Confirmed

Communities across multiple counties in upstate NY are on the brink of an economic boom driven by major developments like Micron, Chobani, and the Tech Hub. The Tug Hill Commission, with partners SUNY Oswego and Operation Oswego County, have secured a top-notch line-up of speakers on the afternoon of Monday, April 20, before the full day Tug Hill Local Government Conference. The four-hour session will provide insights and strategies as speakers explore how local governments can capitalize on this growth economy by adapting policies and planning practices to benefit residents, strengthen communities, and support fiscal health.

The afternoon's featured speaker is **Bill Fulton**, FAICP, a native of Auburn, NY whose career has taken him across the country with a wide variety of experiences. Bill is one of America's major thought leaders on land use, economic development, and urban development. He has held many roles, including mayor of Ventura, CA, director of planning and economic development for San Diego, director of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research at Rice University, TX, and the vice president of policy and implementation at Smart Growth America.

Attendees will next hear from the town of Clay, home to the under-construction Micron campus. Edward Flynn, director of planning at LaBella Associates and Brian Bender, commissioner of planning and development for Clay, will present the **Town of Clay Land Use Plan: Leveraging Transformative Economic Development to Create a Community of Place**. Patrick Calhoun, capital projects analyst with Liberty Affordable Housing, will present **The Housing Developer's Shopping List**. The afternoon session will wrap up with a very insightful perspective, **Lessons Learned from Global Foundries, a Local Government Perspective**, shared by J. Gregory Connors, executive director, Saratoga Economic Development Corporation and former town supervisor, town of Stillwater.

The cost for the April 20 session is \$20 if registered by March 20. Register online at events.humanitix.com/lgc-2026, or by mail using the registration form at www.tughill.org/localgovernmentconference.

Commission Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 4 at 10:00 a.m. at the Lowville Municipal Building, 5533 Bostwick Street, Lowville, NY 13367.

The public is welcome to attend.

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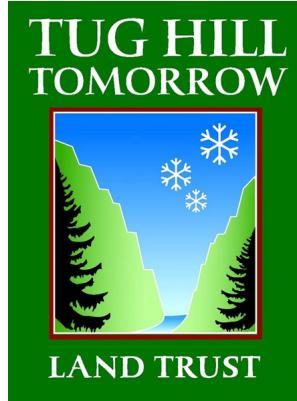
Newly Elected Officials Webinar Materials Online

Sarah Brancatella and Lori Mithen-DeMasi, expert attorneys from the [NY Association of Towns](#), delivered a very informative webinar on Wednesday, January 28 for newly elected officials. Topics covered included conflicts of interest, code of ethics and boards of ethics, financial disclosure requirements, typical town offices and their roles and oaths of office. A recording of the webinar and the slide deck are available at tughill.org/services/training/. This webinar was sponsored by the NYS Tug Hill Commission and the region's five councils of governments: the Cooperative Tug Hill Council, Northern Oneida County Council of Governments, River Area Council of Governments, North Shore Council of Governments and Salmon Rivers Council of Governments.



Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust Community Survey Responses Needed by February 2

Tug Hill Tomorrow Land Trust (THTLT) is inviting community members to share their thoughts on the future of the Tug Hill region and priorities for the land trust as they embark on a five-year strategic plan. This short, anonymous [survey](#) should take less than ten minutes and asks about what lands, waters, and community programs matter most to the community, as well as individual experiences with THTLT's lands and programs. Community input will help guide conservation, recreation, and education priorities for the years ahead.



Commission Staff Attend NYAOT Newly Elected Training School

Four staff attended the New York Association of Towns Newly Elected Training School on January 21 through 23 in Corning to learn about town government. The training is designed for newly elected officials, such as town supervisors, clerks, board members, and highway superintendents, to learn about municipal laws, budgeting, and overall town processes. Wednesday, January 21, kicked off with learning about town basics (e.g., what a town is and services it provides), motions, resolutions, ordinances, and local laws, as well as town budgets, local procurement, and basics of municipal liability. Thursday, January 22, included topics about fiscal responsibilities, public comments, Freedom of Information Law (FOIL), personnel management, and accounting responsibilities. Friday, January 23, concluded with information about cash management and highways. The training provided a great foundation for newly elected town leaders. It helped commission staff understand the ins and outs of what these leaders must know, and it will help inform how the commission staff can better support Tug Hill towns in the future.



February 5 Effective Board Meeting Management Webinar

Strong meetings lead to strong boards. Join Lewis County, the Northern NY Community Foundation, and the Tug Hill Commission for the fourth session of our Nonprofit Bootcamp Series, focused on practical tools and best practices for running effective nonprofit board meetings.

This one-hour virtual session will cover key topics such as setting clear meeting agendas, understanding and using Robert's Rules of Order, taking effective meeting minutes, supporting good decision-making, and sharing strategies to keep meetings productive and mission-focused. Join us on Thursday, February 5, from noon to 1 p.m. on Zoom. **Barbara Paxton, Director at BoardStrong**, is the workshop's featured expert. BoardStrong helps nonprofit organizations strengthen board leadership, governance, and oversight through training, consultation, and educational resources.

This session is open to anyone interested in nonprofit governance and will be especially helpful for board members, officers, and nonprofit leaders. Many of the items discussed will be transferrable to municipal boards as well. Register [here](#).



2025 WQIP Grants Announced

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) grants were recently announced. WQIP grants support projects that protect drinking water, combat contributors to harmful algal blooms, update aging water infrastructure, and improve aquatic habitat in communities statewide. Several Tug Hill communities were selected to receive funding. Tug Hill Commission staff worked closely with Leyden, Turin, and Western on applications to fund salt storage facilities, either by constructing new facilities or rebuilding aging or damaged infrastructure. These facilities will provide more efficient road services for residents, cleaner water in nearby drinking wells, mitigate de-icing material debris from entering nearby waterways, and provide a safe work environment for town employees.



- The town of Leyden was awarded \$552,485 to construct a salt storage facility to replace an existing undersized salt/sand storage shed. This project will protect the water quality of Sugar River and groundwater.
- The town of Turin was awarded \$321,186 to construct a salt storage facility to cover an existing uncovered salt/sand pile. The new storage facility will protect the water quality of Mill Creek.
- The town of Western was awarded \$146,380 to construct a badly damaged and undersized salt structure. The project will increase salt storage capacity and protect water quality in the Mohawk River watershed and groundwater.

Further, the following applicants were also successful in their pursuit of funding through the WQIP program.

- The village of Constableville was awarded \$1,320,000 to replace a failing and undersized culvert to meet current design standards. The new culvert will reduce erosion, restore aquatic connectivity, and reduce flood risk in the Sugar River Watershed.
- Lewis County was awarded \$1,148,000 to replace an undersized culvert that conveys the Deer River under Woodbattle Road in the village of Copenhagen. This new structure will restore aquatic organism passage and improve flood resilience.
- The town of Richland was awarded \$164,000 to construct a salt storage facility to cover an uncovered salt pile. The new storage facility will protect the Salmon River watershed.

The commission wishes to convey their excitement and congratulations to the communities receiving awards in Round 21! It is never too early to plan for your Round 22 application – contact the commission office if you'd like grant writing assistance.

Regenerate NY Forestry Cost Share Grants Open

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) over \$5 million available in a fifth round of the Regenerate NY forestry cost share grant program. The program provides financial assistance to private landowners establishing new forests, improving the health of existing forests, and restoring forests impacted by factors such as deer browse, invasive pests, or fragmentation.

Private landowners may apply for grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$1 million to conduct one or more of the following practices on their property:

- Planting trees to restore or create new forests,
- Creating young forest habitat to initiate natural regeneration and improve wildlife habitat,
- Thinning to remove unhealthy or close-growing trees and to promote forest health or regrowth,
- Removing competing or invasive vegetation, and
- Installing tree protection to prevent deer browse of young tree seedlings.

Eligible applicants include any individual, trust, corporate entity or other for-profit organization that owns between five and 2,500 acres of undeveloped land that is forested or can become forested. Not-for-profit organizations and Indian Nations or Tribes with five or more acres of undeveloped land are also eligible and are not subject to the 2,500-acre maximum requirement. Projects must be guided by a private forester or natural resource professional. There is no limit to the number of applications/bids that a landowner or organization may submit; however, they cannot be for the same land area. Projects must be completed by December 15, 2029.

DEC will host a [webinar](#) on Tuesday, February 3, to provide information and answer questions about this funding opportunity. Applications will be accepted until Thursday, August 27, 2026, and must be submitted through the [Statewide Financial System](#) (SFS). Applicants must register for an [SFS account](#) before they can apply, and not-for-profits must also prequalify by the deadline or their application will not be evaluated. For more details about the grant opportunity, visit [DEC's website](#) or email Regen-NY@dec.ny.gov.

MUNICIPAL TRAINING



PREPARING YOUR MUNICIPALITY FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY APPLICATIONS

Renewable energy applications are becoming increasingly common across New York State. Join us for this training designed to give municipal officials, board members, and interested residents a clear overview of how municipalities can prepare before an application is submitted. The program will conclude with a Q&A, allowing participants to ask questions and discuss common municipal concerns.

MARCH 30, 2026

Monday | 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Croghan Fire Hall | 6860 Fire Hall St, Croghan, NY 13327

TOPIC HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Municipal Authority
- ✓ Local Law Considerations
- ✓ Municipal Review Team Roles
- ✓ Project Application Review Process

PRE-REGISTER



PRESENTER

Bridget O'Toole, Esq.

Ms. O'Toole is a partner at Heath & O'Toole PLLC with extensive experience assisting municipalities, applicants, and community groups participating in Local, State and Federal siting proceedings for renewable energy facilities and transmission lines.



LEWIS
COUNTY
NEW YORK



Northern Border Regional Commission Grants Open

The [Northern Border Regional Commission](#) (NBRC) has three grant programs open, with required pre-applications due February 27, 2026, and applications by invitation due April 17, 2026. The **Catalyst** program is NBRC's flagship competitive grant program, formerly known as the State Economic & Infrastructure Development (SEID) program. Through Catalyst, NBRC invests in state economic development priorities to support a broad range of initiatives that modernize and expand the Northern Border region's basic infrastructure and revitalizes communities to support and attract the region's workforce.

NBRC's **Forest Economy** program is designed to support state-identified development plans for the regional forest economy and to assist in the industry's evolution to include new technologies and viable business models. NBRC's **Timber for Transit** program advances the use of wood materials and composites through applied research and demonstration projects that showcase the suitability of such materials in transportation and transportation adjacent infrastructure.

NY Adopts Mandatory Greenhouse Gas Reporting

In December 2025, NYS adopted a new regulation requiring certain facilities and fuel suppliers to report greenhouse gas emissions to the state. The regulation (6 NYCRR Part 253) applies to facilities located in NY that emit 10,000 metric tons or more of carbon dioxide equivalent per year, as well as upstream fuel suppliers whose products generate emissions when used in the state. Covered entities include large industrial and energy facilities, electric power generators and importers, fuel distributors, waste transporters associated with out-of-state disposal, and suppliers of agricultural lime and fertilizer. These requirements extend beyond traditional smokestack emissions and are intended to capture emissions associated with fuel use and electricity consumption. The first reporting year will be calendar year 2026, with initial reports due June 1, 2027.

For Tug Hill communities, the immediate impact is largely indirect. Most towns and villages will not be reporting entities themselves, but facilities operating in rural areas such as landfills, fuel suppliers, or energy-related businesses, may now face new compliance obligations. More broadly, the program signals a shift toward data-driven environmental oversight that may influence future permitting decisions, infrastructure planning, and eligibility for state funding.

Water Infrastructure Projects Webinar February 5

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced \$6.5 billion in Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) funding for water systems, plus an additional \$550 million available to state infrastructure finance authorities through the State WIFIA program. On Thursday, February 5, from 1:00-3:00 p.m., presenters from EPA will discuss the WIFIA, Clean Water SRF (CWSRF), and Drinking Water SRF (DWSRF) programs, and how WIFIA and the SRFs can work together. Following the overview, attendees can engage in an interactive Q&A session to ask EPA experts any questions they may have about the programs and accessing these funds. Click [here](#) for more information or to register.



Stormwater Management Essentials for Small Systems February 19



Small stormwater systems face many of the same stormwater challenges as large cities- flooding, pollution, and aging infrastructure but usually with limited budgets and smaller staff. On Thursday, February 19, from noon to 1:00 p.m., join this no cost webinar which will provide a practical introduction to stormwater runoff and hydrology, with a focus on how stormwater affects wastewater systems and local watersheds. Participants will learn how nutrients and contaminants in runoff impact receiving waters, and how green infrastructure can be used to manage stormwater. The webinar will end with a walkthrough of free EPA tools that can be used to support planning, decision-making, and grant applications. Click [here](#) for more information or to register.

Contact Us

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