

NorCOG and SRCG Hold Winter Meetings

The North Shore Council of Governments (NorCOG) and the Salmon Rivers Council of Governments (SRCG) each held their winter meetings this week. In NorCOG, representatives from Central Square, Cleveland, Constantia and West Monroe met to review ongoing efforts and hear a featured presentation from Aaron McKeon from Central New York Regional Planning and Development on the Oneida Lake 9E watershed initiative. The presentation highlighted regional planning efforts affecting shoreline and watershed communities. Council business included updates on the Southern Oswego County Regional Interceptor Sewer (SOCRIS) project, coordination of the 2026 calendar, continued development of a NorCOG logo, and updates regarding Tug Hill Reserve Act and the Oneida Lake Association. Members also reviewed a draft of the *Explore the North Shore Community Guide*, being developed to showcase recreation, history, and community events. Municipal updates allowed members to share emerging local issues and common challenges.



Front left to right: Ron Chapman, Constantia Supervisor; Richard Colesante, NorCOG Chair; Laureen Tackman, Cleveland Mayor.
Back left to right: Randy House, Central Square Mayor; Millard Murphy, NorCOG Vice Chair and Central Square Deputy Mayor; Robin Wilson, Cleveland Trustee; Dale Maher, West Monroe Supervisor.

SRCG representatives from the towns of Albion, Amboy, Orwell, Parish, and Richland, along with the villages of Parish and Pulaski, also met to conduct regular business. The council reviewed SOCRIS updates and coordinated its 2026 calendar. Members discussed a letter of interest from the town of Sandy Creek to join SRCG, and the council voted to welcome Sandy Creek as a new member. SRCG also adopted a resolution to move forward with a plan related to the Tug Hill Reserve Act. Additional business included annual dues, bookkeeping updates, and information on the annual Salmon River Clean-Up scheduled for April 11. Both councils continue to demonstrate the strength of regional collaboration as they work together to address shared services, planning, environmental stewardship, and community development throughout the Tug Hill region.

In This Issue

- NorCOG and SRCG Winter Meetings
- Deforiet Adopts Amended Zoning Law
- 2026-2027 Records Management Grants
- Commission Board Meeting
- Jefferson County Visitors Investment Fund
- RACOG Economic Visioning Summit
- Jefferson County SWCD Erosion and Sediment Control Workshop March 5
- Planning & Zoning Board Training March 11
- Management & Finance for Small Wastewater & Water Systems Workshop March 17 & 18
- Local Governments Warned of Fraudulent Invoices Targeting Planning & Zoning Applicants
- When Can the Board Go Into Executive Session
- Non-Profit Bootcamp - Strategic Planning Fundamentals March 5
- Income Surveys 101 Workshop March 25
- EXPRESS NY Accepting Suggestions
- Floodplain Course April 13-17



Front left to right: Jackie Murphy, Parish Mayor; Larry Atkinson, Richland Councilmember; Mike Faulkner, Albion Supervisor and SRCG Vice Chair; Rosemary Elridge, Parish Trustee.
Back left to right: Jim Condon, Orwell Councilmember; Gary Wood, Parish Councilmember; Jim Bernys Parish Supervisor; Holly Humphries, Amboy Supervisor; Jan Tighe, Pulaski Trustee and SRCG Chair; and Larry Rayder, Amboy Councilmember.

Deferiet Adopts Amended Zoning Law

The village of Deferiet adopted its amended zoning law at the February 11 board meeting, following a public hearing. The updates address regulations for solar energy systems, battery energy storage systems, and electric vehicle charging stations, while also modifying the former industrial district to allow for multi-use development and additional small-lot residential dwellings. The zoning law amendments were driven in part by the demolition of the former mill site and the village's vision for its future redevelopment. Along with the recently adopted comprehensive plan, the updated zoning law supports Deferiet's goal of strengthening community identity while continuing to serve its residents and visitors.

2026-2027 Records Management Grants Due April 1

New York State Archives is now accepting applications for the 2026-2027 Local Government Records Management Improvement Fund (LGRMIF) grant cycle. The LGRMIF provides grants to 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. The purpose of LGRMIF grants is not to support local government records management programs indefinitely. Local governments are expected to assume primary responsibility for ongoing support of their programs by providing the resources to manage their records on a continuing basis.

If you plan to apply for an LGRMIF grant, your Records Management Officer (RMO) must have a NYS Directory Service (NYSDS) account by **March 18, 2026**. If you do not have a NYSDS account, please visit the [eGrants](#) page for information and complete the [online registration form](#). The application due date is **April 1, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.** For more information visit the [LGRMIF webpage](#) or check out the [grants application guidelines](#). Interested applicants can also view the [six part LGRMIF webinar series](#) that covers topics such as navigating the eGrants portal, writing the grant narrative, completing grant forms and more. Contact New York State Archives at: archgrants@nysed.gov (link sends e-mail) or (518) 474-6926.

Commission Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 18 at 10:00 a.m. at the Lorraine Municipal Building, 20876 County Route 189, Lorraine, NY 13659.

The public is welcome to attend.

Jefferson County Visitors Investment Fund Announced

The Jefferson County Visitors Investment Fund, started this year and financed by a portion of the county's occupancy tax, supports re-investment in tourism-related products and infrastructure that enhances the visitor experience in Jefferson County. The fund is being managed by the 1000 Islands International Tourism Council. Funded projects are intended to:

- Increase the quality and diversity of tourism offerings,
- Encourage visitors to stay longer and spend more,
- Support tourism throughout Jefferson County.



Eligible applicants are private, for profit operators; not-for-profit organizations; and municipalities in Jefferson County. Projects must be located in Jefferson County and directly serve Jefferson County visitors. Ineligible projects are standalone events; improvements to residential housing stock, including short-term rentals; and marking, staffing, or other operational expenses. Maximum award is \$25,000, with a minimum 10% cash match required. The first round of applications is due April 30, with a second round due August 1.

More details, including required materials and common types of eligible projects, are available at visit1000islands.com/visitors-investment-fund/. Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult with the 1000 Islands International Tourism Council before submitting. To schedule a pre-application consultation, email Corey Fram, director of tourism, at corey@visit1000islands.com or call (315) 482.2520.

RIVER AREA ECONOMIC VISIONING SUMMIT

5th Annual



**FREE EVENT
REGISTRATION
REQUIRED**

Thursday, March 19, 2026

8:30 AM to 2:35 PM (Lunch Included)

BOCES Howard G. Sackett Technical Center

5836 State Route 12

Glenfield, NY 13343

(Back Building)



Event is free, pre-registration is required at <https://tinyurl.com/evs2026> or by contacting Mickey Dietrich by phone (315) 681-5023 or by email mickey@tughill.org.

Agenda

8:30 - Introduction

8:40 - Mentimeter Game

9:10 - Lewis County Manager: Tim Hunt

9:20 - Rooted Locally, Growing Regionally: Joe Lawrence, Jay Matteson, & Agriculture Businesses

11:10 - Break

11:25 - BOCES Updates (Maple Ridge Center & JCC Extension Building): Jeffrey Ginger and Jamie Birchenough

11:40 - Technology Changes for Local Governments: Patrick Brady

12:00 - Lunch

1:00 - Planning for Economic Growth: Chris Barboza, Hartley Bonisteel Schweitzer, Cassandra Buell, Joanne Witt, Marshall Weir

2:35 - Adjournment

RIVER AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

Jefferson County SWCD Erosion and Sediment Control Workshop March 5



The Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District will be hosting a four-hour erosion and sediment control workshop on March 5 at the Jefferson-Lewis BOCES, 20104 Arsenal St, Watertown. Under the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation's Stormwater Permit, all developers, contractors, and subcontractors must identify at least one trained contractor from their company to be responsible for implementation of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and have at least one trained contractor on site on a daily basis when soil disturbance activities are being performed. Certification from this workshop is valid for three years. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis, and space is limited. The cost is \$125. Visit their website to [register online](#).

Introductory
**Planning & Zoning Board
Training**

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

Join us for a training with the Tug Hill Commission designed to prepare new Planning Board and ZBA members to step confidently into their roles.

- Croghan Town Office**
9882 State Route 126, Castorland, NY 13620
- March 11, 2026**
- 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM**

LEWIS COUNTY

March 17 and 18 Online Workshop: Management & Finance for Small Wastewater & Water Systems

[RCAP Solutions](#) is offering a free, accredited, online workshop on Tuesday, March 17 and Wednesday, March 18, from 9:00 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. both days. "Management and Finance for Small Wastewater and Water Systems" will provide participants the basics of system management, asset management, budgets, reserves, interpreting financial reports, financial monitoring, rate setting, communication, and planning for long-term sustainability.



The workshop has been approved for 4.25 CEUs for NY wastewater operators and is pending approval for 4.0 CEUs for NY drinking water operators. Attendance at both sessions is required to receive credit. The webinar will use the GoToTraining platform, and all participants must register ahead of time [here](#).

Small wastewater and water systems are vital to public health and the environment, yet many face challenges related to financial sustainability and effective management. This workshop provides essential financial and managerial information, skills, and resources. Topics that will be covered at the workshop include: Key Management Areas, Communication, Finances, Asset Management, Budgets, Reserves, Financial Monitoring and Rates

Local Governments Warned of Fraudulent Invoices Targeting Planning and Zoning Applicants

The NYS Department of State (DOS) Division of Local Government Services Training Program is alerting municipalities to a rise in fraudulent invoice schemes targeting applicants before planning and zoning boards. These scams exploit publicly available application information and attempt to deceive applicants into paying fake project review or referral fees. The division has received an increasing number of reports from communities where applicants have received invoices appearing to come from their municipality for additional project review costs or county referral fees. In reality, these invoices are fraudulent and are being generated by scammers using publicly available information from municipal websites.

Under Open Meetings Law §103(e), municipalities that maintain regularly updated websites are required to post planning and zoning board applications and project files online. These documents often contain personal information such as applicant names, physical addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers. Scammers have been accessing these publicly available materials and using the information to create convincing but fraudulent invoices that appear official. This type of fraud not only places applicants at financial risk but also undermines public trust in municipal processes. Local officials are encouraged to take proactive measures to reduce the risk of misuse of publicly posted information while still complying with transparency requirements.

To help municipalities protect applicants and prevent fraud, the Division of Local Government Services recommends the following actions:

- **Redact sensitive personal information** such as email addresses, phone numbers, and any financial information before posting application materials online. Names of property owners or applicants and physical addresses are considered public records and should remain available.
- **Post warnings on municipal websites** advising applicants to be cautious of fraudulent correspondence and to verify any unexpected invoices or payment requests directly with municipal staff.
- **Clearly publish fee schedules and project review costs** on municipal websites so applicants can easily verify legitimate municipal fees.

Municipal officials should also remind applicants that legitimate invoices will come directly from municipal offices and that they should contact their municipality immediately if they receive suspicious payment requests. The DOS local government training staff are available to provide technical assistance to local officials on this issue and other land use and local government matters at (518) 473-3355 or localgov@dos.ny.gov.



When Can the Board Go Into Executive Session?

In New York State, a municipal board may enter an executive session (a private, closed-door portion of an open meeting) for specific, narrowly defined purposes under Open Meetings Law (§105(1)(a-h)). *A public vote and a motion identifying the subject to be discussed are required before entering the session.*

Specifically:

- a. matters which will imperil public safety if disclosed;
- b. any matter which may disclose the identity of a law enforcement agent or informer;
- c. information relating to current or future investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense which would imperil effective law enforcement if disclosed;
- d. discussions regarding proposed, pending or current litigation;
- e. collective negotiations pursuant to article fourteen of the civil service law;
- f. the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to the appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation;
- g. the preparation, grading or administration of examinations;
- h. the proposed acquisition, sale or lease of real property or the proposed acquisition of securities, or sale or exchange of securities held by such public body, but only when publicity would substantially affect the value thereof.

As such, a public body cannot conduct an executive session to discuss the subject of its choice. Further, once in an executive session, no action by formal vote shall be taken to appropriate public moneys.

NON-PROFIT BOOTCAMP



Session #5

STRATEGIC PLANNING FUNDAMENTALS

Join us for a session designed to help nonprofit leaders develop clear, practical strategic plans that guide decision-making and strengthen long-term impact. This session will walk participants through the core components of strategic planning, from setting priorities to creating achievable goals and aligning board and staff leadership. Whether your organization is building a plan from scratch or refreshing an existing one, you'll leave with tools and a framework you can immediately put to use.

MARCH 5, 2026

Thursday | 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

Virtually via Zoom

TOPIC HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ Organizational Priorities
- ✓ Strengths & Opportunities
- ✓ Setting Goals
- ✓ Implementation Planning

REGISTER



EXPERT

 **Jeffrey Grimshaw Consulting, LLC**

Jeff Grimshaw is an experienced leader in community and organizational development, having served in senior roles in higher education, public safety, and nonprofit leadership. He holds a degree in Public Administration from SUNY Empire State College and specializes in strategic leadership and community impact.



Northern New York
Community Foundation



Income Surveys 101 Workshop March 25, Syracuse

The [NYS Office of Community Renewal](#), [Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center](#), [RCAP Solutions](#), and [NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation](#) are partnering to offer a free workshop **“Income Surveys: Designing and Conducting a Compliant Survey.”** In-person attendance is encouraged on Wednesday, March 25 from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Syracuse Center for Excellence, 727 E. Washington Street, Syracuse, although the session will be live-streamed as well. All participants must [register](#), and if interested in live streaming indicate so on the form. Please contact Jes Eckerlin, jeschn01@syr.edu, with any questions.

Attendees will learn when an income survey is needed, receive step-by-step guidance on designing and conducting a statistically sound survey, and understand key procedural requirements of surveys per grant funds through the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation and NYS Office of Community Renewal. NYSEFC and CDBG. Municipal and utility staff, local government officials, community leaders, technical assistance providers, and anyone who is interested or involved in planning or funding infrastructure projects in New York State.

Speakers:

Jes Eckerlin, Funding Specialist, [Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center](#)

Nick Demitraszek, Legislative Affairs and Community Assistance Coordinator, [Environmental Facilities Corporation](#)

Charlie Phillion, Program Director Community Development, [NYS Office of Homes & Community Renewal](#)

EXPRESS NY Accepting Suggestions

A new statewide effort called EXPRESS NY (Expediting Processes and Regulations to Enable Streamlined Services) is asking for New Yorkers to submit ideas on how state government can work better by tackling outdated and burdensome regulations, policies, and practices that stand in the way of delivering for New Yorkers. Ideas should be submitted in [this portal](#) by April 3. EXPRESS NY was announced in Governor Hochul’s 2026 State of the State of the State address.

In October, Governor Hochul directed state agencies to identify outdated or obsolete regulations and policies. In this initial phase, agencies identified nearly 100 potential regulations and practices in need of reform, modernization or elimination. Opportunities to cut red tape that state agencies have identified include: removing unnecessary fees for small businesses, expediting occupational licensing renewals for workers, digitizing paper-based processes, rescinding unenforced and out of date regulations, and reducing burdensome and unnecessary reporting requirements.

Specific areas of focus include recommendations that will:

- **Speed up housing & infrastructure development** by addressing obstacles that slow down the ability to build affordable housing and other infrastructure New Yorkers depend on: transportation, childcare centers, water infrastructure, parks, community centers, and more.
- **Support small businesses** by tackling burdensome requirements and fees that make it difficult for businesses to launch, serve customers, or grow.
- **Streamline access to services** by simplifying complicated processes or removing unnecessary hurdles that prevent families from accessing benefits and services that New York State supports or oversees (e.g., healthcare, childcare, nutrition, mental health).

Floodplain Course April 13-17, Oriskany

The NYS Office of Emergency Management is offering “Managing Floodplain Development through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)” Monday, April 13 through Friday, April 17 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the State Preparedness Training Center, 5900 Airport Road, Oriskany. Attendees should register as soon as possible [here](#). There is no fee for the course, but food, lodging & transportation costs are the responsibility of the participant.

Local officials responsible for administering local floodplain management ordinances, including but not limited to floodplain management administrators, building inspectors, code enforcement/zoning officers, planners, city/county managers, attorneys, engineers, and public works officials are encouraged to attend. The course will describe important aspects of basic floodplain management practices necessary to begin a participant’s floodplain management career.

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](http://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](#).