

## COG Chairs Meet in Rodman

All five Tug Hill Councils of Governments (COGs) were well represented by council chairs Bob Sauer (Northern Oneida County), Rip Colesante (North Shore), Jan Tighe (Salmon Rivers), Heidi Lehman (River Area), and council vice-chair Doug Dietrich (Cooperative Tug Hill) at their annual meeting this week with commission staff and board representatives. Topics discussed ranged from the Tug Hill Commission's budget, board and staffing; shared services opportunities; and the increasingly high cost of doing municipal business. Each COG shared details about council specific efforts, including the River Area's strategic plan, the North Shore's community guide, Northern Oneida County's GPS program, Salmon Rivers' focus on improving recreation along river corridors, and Cooperative Tug Hill's continuing emphasis on road infrastructure.



The group agreed to convene the broader membership of the five councils this fall, a meeting informally referred to as "SuperCOG." That fall meeting will provide continued opportunity to share common issues and concerns, generate ideas for future collaboration, and provide additional grassroots-generated direction to the Tug Hill Commission.

## Commission Board Meets in Lorraine

The Tug Hill Commission met on Wednesday, March 18 in Lorraine, Jefferson County. Discussion items included the upcoming COG chairs meeting, arrangements for the fall annual meeting, and finalization of the strategic plan dashboard and the Headwaters annual report. Staffer Taylor McKinney reviewed a draft of a new local roads issue paper, which will be finished later this spring. The board also received a report on activities in the Cooperative Tug Hill Council from Angie Kimball, of which Lorraine is a member. Local officials in attendance were David Broadhurst, Adams mayor, Jan Tighe, Pulaski trustee and Salmon Rivers Council of Governments chair, and Norm Paradis, Worth councilmember.

The next commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 20, at 10:00 a.m. in Orwell, Oswego County.

### In This Issue

- COG Chairs Meet in Rodman
- Commission Board Meets in Lorraine
- Ben Coe Passes Away at Age 95
- 2025 Strategic Plan Year-in-Review Dashboard Live
- Understanding Energy Storage Webinar March 31
- SFS Tips and Tricks Webinar April 2
- Strategic Plan Dashboard
- Wastewater Cybersecurity Webinar April 2
- Engineering Rural Water Projects Webinar April 9
- NYSP21 Community Grant Program 2026-2027
- Rural Resources Fair in Albany

## Ben Coe Passes Away at Age 95

Ben Coe, the first executive director of the NYS Tug Hill Commission, passed away on March 21 at age 95. He served as executive director for 20 years, retiring in October 1993. In May 2013, Ben was designated as a Tug Hill Sage by the commission, and he was later honored as a Venerable Folk of Tug Hill. Ben's commitment to keeping the organization focused on grassroots, unbiased, nonregulatory support to rural communities created a foundation for the organization's continued success, and left a lasting, positive legacy in the region. Ben's full obituary can be read [here](#).



# 2025 Strategic Plan Year-in-Review Dashboard Live

The NYS Tug Hill Commission is excited to introduce its new strategic plan dashboard, a tool designed to enhance transparency and accessibility of the commission's work. As part of the recently adopted 2025–2029 Strategic Plan, the dashboard provides a dynamic way to view progress on the commission's goals and initiatives. The strategic plan itself builds on decades of long-range planning and outlines priorities, actions, and measures of success that guide its work across the Tug Hill region.

The new dashboard takes this a step further by transforming the plan from a static document into a living resource. Users can easily explore strategic objectives, see what the commission is working on, and understand the impact on the municipalities they serve. By organizing information in a clear, visual format, the dashboard makes it easier for local officials, partners, and community members to stay informed and engaged.

The first page of the dashboard provides more numerical information, like how many technical and issue papers were created, the number of comprehensive plans and zoning laws developed and amended, and information on grants submitted and awarded. It also provides estimated community savings for the planning components. Information is presented on the Local Government Conference, councils of governments, workshops and webinars, and community support. The second page provides further details about regionwide collaboration, including conferences presented at, participation in statewide committees, collaborative work, and more.

Whether you are a municipal leader, partner organization, or interested resident, the dashboard offers an easy way to stay connected to the commission's work. You are encouraged to explore the dashboard and see how the commission is putting its strategic plan into action. To view the live Strategic Plan Dashboard, visit: [tughill.org/strategic-plan/](http://tughill.org/strategic-plan/). We have included the main dashboard as page 3 of this newsletter as well.

## Understanding Energy Storage Webinar March 31

The Tug Hill Commission is hosting a free webinar, **Understanding Energy Storage: Market Drivers, Technologies, and Community Considerations**, on Tuesday, March 31 from 6 to 8 p.m. Supported by subject matter experts from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), Sandia National Laboratories, and the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), this program will address key topics of interest to local governments and communities in the region, including:

- Energy storage drivers in NY (including energy markets, policies, and programs)
- Introductions to relevant energy storage technologies
- Overview of critical planning and zoning considerations
- Fire safety and incident management

There will be plenty of time for questions and answers at the end of the webinar, facilitated by Tug Hill Commission staff. Register at [tinyurl.com/TugHillEnergyStorage](http://tinyurl.com/TugHillEnergyStorage).

Speakers will include: **Ian Latimer**, program manager with NYSEERDA's Clean Energy Siting team, where he works directly with local governments, local and regional planners, and other stakeholders to pursue responsible clean energy deployment; **Dr. Ramesh Koripella** from Sandia National Laboratories, technical expert on battery and hydrogen storage technologies for grid storage; and **Erin Minear and Dr. Stephanie Shaw** from EPRI, where research focuses on safety, reliability, affordability and environmental impacts of energy storage.

## SFS Tips and Tricks Webinar April 2

If you or someone you know is involved in a non-for-profit organization that applies to New York State grant funding opportunities, please join us on April 2 at noon for **Tips and Tricks for Navigating the Statewide Financial System (SFS) for Non-profits**. Kristen Hamilton, Assistant Director for the NYS Office of Information Technology Services and Lillian Padilla, Deputy Director of Nonprofit Affairs, NYS Executive Chamber, will tell participants everything they need to know about registering in SFS, getting pre-qualified, and searching for funding.

This is the final session in the Non-Profit Bootcamp organized by Lewis County, the Northern New York Community Foundation, and the Tug Hill Commission. Register at [tinyurl.com/SFSforNonprofits](http://tinyurl.com/SFSforNonprofits).



# NYS Tug Hill Commission 2025-2029 Strategic Plan Year One Metrics



## Who We Serve

In Region	Outside Region
41 Towns	5 Towns
18 Villages	4 Villages
4 Counties	

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

**Tug Hill Times Publication**  
26

## Technical Papers

New	Updated	% Complete
2	0	100%

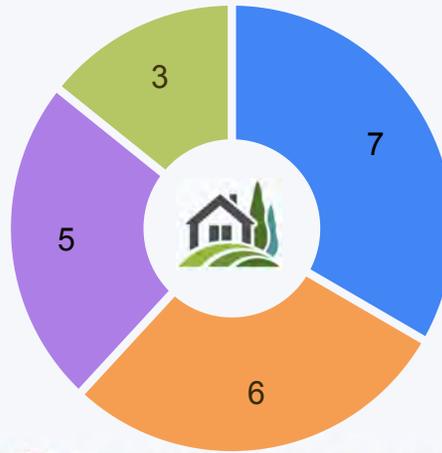
1. A Municipal Guide for Writing Requests for Proposals for Professional Services
2. Introduction to Municipal Websites

## Issue Papers

New	Updated	% Complete
5	1	250%

1. How Winter is Changing in the Tug Hill Region
2. Understanding the Regulatory Changes for Animal Shelters
3. Short-Term Rentals
4. ATV Recreation: Considerations for Municipalities
5. Cybersecurity for Municipal Governments: Managing Risk Across Critical Services

## Planning



- Comprehensive Plan Development
- Comprehensive Plan Amendments
- Zoning Law Development
- Zoning Law Amendments

## Grants

Submitted for Municipalities  
6

Success Rate  
67.7%

Submitted for Non-Profits  
2

Success Rate  
0.0%

Grant Money Awarded  
\$1,056,677

Types of Grants Awarded  
Salt Sheds  
Park Upgrades  
Community Facilities

## Estimated Community Savings

New	
Comprehensive Plans:	\$500,000
Zoning Laws:	\$150,000
Amended	
Comprehensive Plans:	\$150,000
Zoning Laws:	\$105,000
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$905,000</b>

## Councils of Governments Information

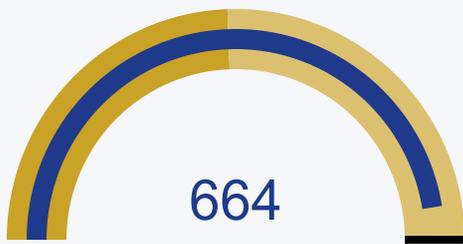
COG	# Communities	Population
CTHC	22	18,210
NOCCOG	17	38,235
NorCOG	4	10,728
RACOG	14	23,986
SRCG	7	12,366

Based on 2020 Census

**Workshops & Webinars** 20  
**Attendees** 1,425

## Local Government Conference

Attendees



0 700  
Dark gold represents the number of attendees from within the region.

## COG Attendance



0 64  
Communities within a Council of Government with at least one attendee.

**Level of Satisfaction** 99%



## Community Support

**MetroCount - # Survey Sites** 40  
**Outside Region Communities Supported** 7  
**Communities that use Laird Petrie for budget and finances** 42

# Wastewater Cybersecurity Webinar April 2

Join the NY Conference of Mayors (NYCOM) on Thursday, April 2, from 1:00 p.m. -2:00 p.m. as they present **Wastewater Cybersecurity: DEC's New Regulations and What They Mean for Municipalities**. The free webinar will discuss the current cybersecurity threats facing the water and wastewater sector and their potential impacts. Also covered will be an overview of the wastewater cybersecurity, and related regulations, recently adopted by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and how these new rules affect municipalities. The session will end with a discussion of the SECURE grant offered through the Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) and how these funds can help support compliance. Click [here](#) for more information or to register.



# Engineering Rural Water Projects Webinar April 9



Join the Syracuse University Environmental Finance Center and representatives from USDA Rural Development on Thursday, April 9, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. for a no cost, hybrid training. Participants will hear directly from USDA Rural Development staff about recent program and bulletin updates, engineering report and contract document requirements, and environmental review considerations associated with USDA-funded projects. Learn how engineers, municipal and utility staff, local government officials, and other community leaders can successfully partner to deliver safe drinking water, strengthen stormwater management, and maintain reliable sanitary sewer systems through USDA Rural Development programs.

USDA Rural Development offers a range of funding opportunities to support essential drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure for rural communities across New York State. In-person attendance at 727 E Washington St., Syracuse, NY 13210 is encouraged, but virtual attendance can be provided upon request. To attend virtually, please indicate so on the [registration form](#). Lunch is provided!

# NYSP2I Community Grants Program 2026-2027

The [New York State Pollution Prevention Institute](#) (NYSP2I) is accepting applications for the [2026-2027 Community Grants Program](#). This program has supported grassroots projects that improve the health, environmental quality, and economic vitality of NYS communities. Organizations are invited to apply for funding that supports innovative pollution-prevention projects in their communities. Successful applicants may receive up to \$30,000 to implement initiatives that promote pollution prevention and environmental sustainability in their communities.

The grant is open to community and nonprofit organizations, municipalities and local governments, and public-sector entities. Projects that focus on raising awareness and understanding of pollution prevention, encourage adoption of best practices, and create measurable environmental and community benefits at the local level are encouraged to apply. The application deadline is 5:00 p.m. on April 24.



## Rural Resources Fair in Albany

The Tug Hill Commission joined over 50 rural groups at the capital this week as part of the annual Legislative Commission on Rural Resource's Rural Resource Fair. The event is an opportunity to showcase a wide range of rural issues, including education, energy and housing to state legislators, staff, and members of the public.

Commission planner Maria Covey staffing the Tug Hill Commission's table in Albany.

### 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](mailto:tughill@tughill.org)

Visit us at:

**Web:** [www.tughill.org](http://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](#).