

Municipal News

A publication of Southern Tier West Regional Planning & Development Board's
Center for Local Government & Community Services

JULY 2007



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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR


Summer Greetings Everyone!

This year emphasis has been firmly placed on shared services and local government effectiveness. Governor Spitzer formed the Commission on Local Government Efficiency & Competitiveness to investigate all levels of local government. They will be looking for ways to improve government services through mergers, consolidations, intermunicipal cooperation, and smart growth. The Commission is asking for input from the governments by way of public hearings and reports of local initiatives. Western New York public hearing will be held on October 24th in Buffalo. More information will be available soon.

Shared services and inter-municipal cooperation provides many opportunities to increase effective and efficient local services. New York State approved 15 million dollars for the Shared Municipal Services Incentive Grant Program 2007-08. Details will be released late summer/early fall. In the selection of shared service grant awards, priority will be given to applications that plan or study consolidations, mergers, and dissolutions; include municipalities that meet fiscal distress indicators; promote shared services between school districts and other municipalities; implement shared highway services project; and develop countywide shared services plans. More information is available online at:

<http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/smsi/smsihome.html>. Also information on a variety of shared services is available at http://www.nyslocalgov.org/shared_services.asp#reports

So, put on your thinking caps. There might be a great way for you and your neighboring municipality to accomplish the same goals, share the personnel, and lighten the cost by combining forces.

Don't forget - - we are only a phone call away. I hope you all have a safe, fun summer. 

Eileen R Weishan
Community Assistance Specialist
Editor

Serving Local Governments of Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Chautauqua Counties

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Funding

for the Southern Tier West Center for Local Government & Community Services is received in part by a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission as well as through annual membership contributions by local governments and annual corporate sponsorships.

✓ STATE ASSISTANCE FOR SHARED MUNICIPAL SERVICES

In 2007 the Department of State will be soliciting applications for the 2007-2008 round of the **Shared Municipal Services Incentive Grant Program**. The grant application award eligibility criteria and reference materials will be available for download on the Department's web site.

2007-2008 SMSI Grant Awards: Competitive grants to two or more municipalities to cover costs associated with shared services, cooperative agreements, consolidations, mergers and dissolutions. In the awarding of grants, priority shall be given to applications that include:

1. **Shared services that include a fiscally distressed municipality**
2. **Plan or implement the consolidation, merger or dissolution of municipalities**
3. **Shared services between school districts and municipalities**
4. **Shared highway services**
5. **Consolidation of health benefit plans offered by two or more municipalities**
6. **County wide shared services**

Eligibility requirements and application guidelines: For funding purposes, municipalities are defined as counties, cities, towns, villages, special improvement districts, fire districts, school districts and, in certain instances, board of cooperative educational services (BOCES). The Application Guidelines will list the restrictions for certain municipalities. The Guidelines will also provide information about application review methods and grant approval procedures.

Grants will be for a maximum of \$200,000 per municipality, with a ten percent local cost share. No part of the grant shall be used for recurring expenses, such as salaries. Awards will be granted only for services that would otherwise be individually provided by each grantee and for which demonstrable financial savings result from sharing, unless for feasibility studies.

For further information please visit the **Division of Local Government homepage** at <http://www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/index.htm> Click on **Shared Municipal Services Incentive Grant Program**.

Application Due Date will be announced later this summer.



✓ TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

✓ PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT

The function of property tax assessment administration is central to the local government and its citizens. The longer it has been since your municipality has updated assessments, the more likely it is that some taxpayers are paying more than their fair share of taxes. By maintaining assessments at market value each year, municipalities in Chautauqua County would receive an equalization rate of 100% and eliminate shifts in school and county tax apportionment caused by fluctuating equalization rates. Having a basic understanding of property assessment will help insure that your municipality is com-

pleting the process as efficiently as possible and allow you to see where your property tax rate is coming from. The mandated reevaluation of all real property within a jurisdiction is costly and challenging. To insure that your jurisdiction's reevaluation is attaining the highest possible degree of property tax equity, citizens need a basic understanding of how and why assessments occur. If you pay property tax, you will benefit from a better understanding of the process and how New York State is deciding your tax rate. That's why Southern Tier West Regional Planning and Development Board in conjunction with the Chautauqua County Conference of Mayors and Town Su-

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✓ PROPERTY TAX ASSESSMENT CONTINUED . . .

pervisors Association is sponsoring a session on property tax assessing in the Chautauqua County region. On August 1, there will be a workshop exclusively for Chautauqua County's elected officials. The August 1st workshop will be held at the Chautauqua Town Hall, 2 Academy Street in Mayville @ 6pm. Dennis Fisher of the Office of Real Property Tax and Bill Morrill, the Director of Real Property Tax for Chautauqua County, will offer presentations and respond to questions about property assessing in the Chautauqua County Region.

There will also be an open session set up for the public that will be held on August 15th at 6pm at the Brocton High School Auditorium. The public is encouraged to attend this special open session armed with questions about the property tax rate in Chautauqua County. Unravel the confusing connections between assessments, tax rates, and constituents tax taxes by attending this meeting. Although taxes can be a sensitive topic, the purpose of this forum is to foster productive conversation and to help everyone better understand the assessment process. This is a unique opportunity for you to gain an understanding of property tax assessment and its influence on the region and its taxpayers.

If you have any questions or would like to register to attend either or both of these workshops, please contact Brian Paschen at bpaschen@southerntierwest.org, or call 716-945-5301. ✓

✓ STATE OFFERS FREE FUNDING WORKSHOPS

The New York State Water & Sewer Infrastructure Co-funding Initiative will be holding its 2007 Co-funding Workshop and Individual Project Consultations in four locations this fall. The schedule includes Painted Post on Wednesday, September 26, Corning/Painted Post Holiday Inn, 304 So. Hamilton St.

This initiative was created to improve infrastructure through enhanced State and local government partnerships by helping communities obtain optimum project public financing. Agencies participating in this initiative include NYS Department of State, NYS Department of Health, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, Office for Small Cities, US Department of Agriculture Rural Development, and NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation. For example, if a municipality is interested in applying for funding for a water treatment plant, the coordination of funding for the project would be completed through the Co-Funding Initiative.

The free full-day workshop includes information on various public funding programs, application processes and procedures, project planning and development, plus much more. Presenters include representatives from New York State's Environmental Facilities Corporation, Office for Small Cities, Department of Health, Department of Environmental Conservation, Department of State, and USDA Rural Development. Individual Project Consultations will be arranged by appointment and held concurrently with the workshops. The consultations give communities an opportunity to discuss their particular water or sewer project with agency funding experts.

The program is specifically developed for local officials, county planners, economic developers, consulting engineers and fiscal advisors. Approval is pending for training contact hours for Drinking Water and Wastewater Operators. For additional information visit the Environmental Facilities Corporation website at www.nysefc.org or call 1-800-882-9721. ✓

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✓ TRAINING SCHEDULE

Property Tax Assessment

August 1 & 15, Chautauqua Town Hall, 6:00 p.m.

Code Enforcement: Register with NYS DOS

August 8-10, Building Code of NYS (9F-0630), Southern Tier West

Records Management: Call 847-7903 for registration

September 6, Managing Inactive Records, STW Conference Room

State Comptrollers Office Downlinks: JCC in Jamestown, STW Office, and Belmont BOCES

September 6, Fire District Management

Statewide Training:

September 26, Infrastructure Co-funding Workshop & Consultations, Corning

September 17 - 21, NYCOM Fall Training School, Saratoga Springs

October 22 - 25, NYCOM Public Works School, Lake Placid

November 19, NYCOM Legislative Meeting, Albany

Infrastructure Asset Management Training Series:

August 29, STW Offices ✓

✓ STORMWATER & EROSION CONTROL DEMONSTRATION SERIES

Southern Tier West will begin the Stormwater and Erosion Control Demonstration Series on July 24th at the Olean BOCES in Olean. This demonstration series will give individuals the opportunity to learn how to implement erosion control products that will help minimize the impacts from stormwater.

The need for increased awareness about the impacts from stormwater and erosion are evident when looking at costs that were incurred by counties in the southern tier. Chautauqua County reported that from 1999 to 2005 stormwater damage cost the county \$960,500. Allegany County reported that from 1996 to 2004 the monetary impact from stormwater damage was over \$11,000,000.

These demonstrations will show individuals how to implement best management practices such as erosion control blankets, hydroseeding, silt fencing, and stormwater retention. These best management practices

are used in everyday applications such as ditch protection, construction site stabilization, outfall protection, and stormwater retention. The application of these best management practices will reduce the amount of sediment entering receiving waters such as lakes and streams aiding in the improvement of overall water quality.

The demonstrations will be held at two locations: The Olean BOCES Center in Olean, and the Hewes BOCES Center in Ashville. The dates for the demonstrations are as follows: Olean on July 24, August 21, and September 18; and Ashville on August 7, September 4, and October 9.

More information and registration for this program are available on the Southern Tier West website www.southerntierwest.org by clicking on the link under "current events". If you have any questions or comments, contact Daniel Reynolds Regional Environmental Analyst at (716) 945-5301 x 211 or via e-mail at dreynolds@southerntierwest.org ✓



CAPSULES OF SUCCESS

In last quarter's Newsletter, we applauded the successes of the Village of Sherman in obtaining funding from many diverse sources for an abundance of Village projects. This quarter, the highlighted municipality is the Village of Cattaraugus. As you read about these projects, think of the needs of your community; talk with other municipalities that have completed necessary projects. Where was the money from? How was the project coordinated? What can you learn from their experiences? Give the municipality a call!

The Village of Cattaraugus received funding to deactivate a brownfields site that formerly housed a Bush Bros plant. The standing and exposed debris at the former Bush site has been removed under contract this spring. A small area of petroleum contamination from old standard oil tanks, also on the site, needs to be remediated before the site is ready for future development. The Village has received a \$370,000.00 New York State Environmental Restoration grant, a \$25,200.00 Restore NY grant, and a \$5,000.00 member item from Assemblyman Joe Gigilio to assist with funding this clean-up effort.

The Village has recently completed a waterline replacement project on North Main Street. The waterline main has been relocated from the eastern (downhill) side of Route 353 to the western (uphill) side, which should reduce its vulnerability to breakage due to landslide. This \$310,000.00 project is being partially funded by a \$212,960.00 FEMA Hazard Mitigation grant and a \$50,000.00 Community Capital Assistance Program grant sponsored by Senator Catharine Young.

Following a NYS Labor Department inspection, it was determined that the Public Works Department buildings at the former Ashland Oil site on Leavenworth Street, and the Scott Street building required more repair work and investment than they are worth. The Board and Public Works Superintendent Jason Opferbeck are currently putting together plans for a new, single facility on the Ashland site to store and maintain the department's equipment and vehicles under one roof. A Labor Department grant to fund up to 75% of the estimated \$250,000.00 cost has been submitted. ✓

✓ LUCA PARTICIPATION OPTIONS

The 2010 Census LUCA program offers three participation options:

Option 1 — Title 13 Full Address List Review

Option 2 — Title 13 Local Address List Submission

Option 3 — Non-Title 13 Local Address List Submission

Option 1 and Option 2 require participants to sign the confidentiality agreement in compliance with Title 13, U.S.C., and the data security self assessment checklist. A signed confidentiality agreement is not required for Option 3 because Title 13 data are not provided.

Option 1—Title 13 Full Address List Review

Option 1 allows you to review the entire census address list for your jurisdiction. This includes both city-style addresses (for example, 101 Main Street) and noncity-style addresses (for example, P.O. box, rural route, etc.). This option allows you to update any city-style address on the census address list as well as add new city-style addresses. For census blocks containing all noncity-style addresses, you can only challenge the count of addresses on the (city-

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Southern Tier West Homepage

Southern Tier West's homepage is www.southerntierwest.org. The page describes Southern Tier West's organization, programs, activities, and events and will contain data and links to other useful and interesting sites. We encourage you to visit our homepage and make suggestions for improving the page so that we can make it more useful to you in the future.

✓ LUCA CONTINUED . . .

address count list. If a census block has a mix of city-style and noncity-style addresses, you can update individual city-style addresses **or** challenge the amount of addresses for the census block, but you **cannot** do both.

Each LUCA liaison and reviewer must sign and return the confidentiality agreement. The LUCA liaison is also required to perform a data security self-assessment and complete, sign, and return the self-assessment checklist.

Option 2—Title 13 Local Address List Submission

The Title 13 Local Address List Submission option allows you to submit your local computer readable address file (city-style addresses only) in a predefined Census Bureau format. The Census Bureau will provide their address list and address count list (computer-readable files only) as a reference for your jurisdiction. The Census Bureau address list includes both city-style and noncity-style addresses. You cannot update the census address list or challenge the address counts. The Census Bureau will match your local address file to theirs and make corrections to their census address list.

Each LUCA liaison and reviewer must sign and return the confidentiality agreement. The LUCA liaison is required to perform a data security self-assessment and complete, sign, and return the self-assessment checklist.

Option 3—Non-Title 13 Local Address List Submission

The Non-Title 13 Local Address List Submission option offers you an opportunity to submit your local computer-readable address file (city-style addresses only) to the Census Bureau. Under this option, you **do not** receive the census address list. However, you **do** receive, as a reference, an address count list (computer-readable only) that contains address counts for each of the census blocks within your jurisdiction. The Census Bureau will match your address file to theirs and make corrections to their census address list.

✓ ASSET MANAGEMENT TRAINING SERIES

Asset Management - 4hrs - August 29

This training series will be a general overview of the concept of asset management for all municipalities. Asset management is the planning process that enables a community to get the maximum value from each of its assets and have the financial resources or plans to replace them when necessary.

There are five basic steps to the Asset Management Process: 1) taking inventory of the assets, 2) prioritizing those assets, 3) developing the asset management plan by analyzing the expected life and replacement cost of each asset, 4) implementing the asset management plan by budgeting for and financing the plan, and 5) frequently reviewing and revising the asset management plan.

Participants that should attend all these training sessions are Mayors, Supervisors, City Council members, town and village board members and operators of the systems. The reason for putting elected officials and the operators into these sessions together is to create a dialogue between all the affected decision makers in the planning process.

Infrastructure - Each Session 4 hrs

Roads & Bridges – September 5th
Water/Wastewater -- September 19th
Electric -- September 26 th

These sessions will incorporate the first three steps to the asset management process and examine the issues to a greater extent using specifics for each department: 1) taking inventory of the assets, 2) prioritizing those assets, 3) developing the asset management plan by analyzing the expected life and replacement cost of each asset.

Legal Issues/Liability - 4 hours - Oct 3

During this session there will be discussions on the many legal issues that could derive from owning and anaging municipal assets.

Continued on page 8

✓ SOUTHERN TIER WEST DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION GRANTS AVAILABLE

The Southern Tier West Development Foundation (STWDF) is a **community-based endowment that matches the philanthropic interests of donors with unmet community needs**. The Foundation strives to enhance the quality of life for residents in the region through leadership and innovation in identifying and responding to the community's continuing and changing priorities. STWDF operates exclusively within **Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Chautauque Counties**.

The Foundation is interested in working with those communities that recognize the importance of local planning and development but lack ample or sufficient capacity to act on it. STWDF supports local community and economic development. Priorities are:

- Planning – build the capacity of community leaders to plan, organize and implement initiatives (i.e. Comprehensive Planning – cost of materials for the public or GIS work)
- Community and Economic Development – help advance locally planned initiatives (i.e. Preliminary Engineering for an Infrastructure Project)
- Leadership and Capacity Building – enhance the skills of local officials, organizations and communities to identify, access and sustain community and economic development (i.e. have not funded any project under this, but has to do with training)

The Foundation supports Initiatives that:

- Build leadership in local communities and region;
- Provide a mechanism whereby people can participate directly in the development of their community and region;

- Encourage a sense of “self-help” within communities;
- Provide an incentive for communities to develop their own opportunities.

Grants provided by the Foundation:

- Typically are in the \$500 to \$2,500 range.
- Up to 50% of the total project cost.
- Must be matched dollar for dollar in cash from the grant seeker.

The STWDF will **ONLY** consider projects that:

- Complement the mission and objectives of the Foundation
- Encourage and rely upon local citizen participation
- Enhance or build local citizens and community capacity
- Have leveraged and committed dollar for dollar matching resources

The Foundation accepts grant inquiries year round. To initiate the grant process, a community submits a letter of inquiry. For more information regarding the grant process and the required information to be included in the letter of inquiry, please visit the Foundation's website at www.stwdf.org. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ginger Malak, Foundation Coordinator, at 716-945-5301 extension 201. ✓

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✓ ASSET MANAGEMENT TRAINING SERIES CONTINUED

Capital Planning – 4 hours - Oct 17

During this session there will be discussion on the importance of capital planning and the methods that a municipality could utilize to examine their financial status and ability to resolve an infrastructure failure. Infrastructure facilities are very costly. Careful financial planning is needed in order to afford them without resorting to tax hikes or adding fees. Without sound financial planning, the capital program is nothing more than a wish list that cannot be funded.

The goal of capital planning is to make the best use of available funds to achieve strategic goals and objectives; by managing a portfolio of capital assets to achieve performance goals, with the lowest life-cycle costs, and least risk.

The elements of Capital Planning include: 1) Strategic Plan including values and objectives, 2) Facility Plan – Life Cycle, 3) Rate Study (more than 5 years), 4) Capital Budgeting, Asset Management, Capital Improvement Plan development.

Informational Meetings Nov/Dec

Southern Tier West will facilitate an informational meeting in each of the three counties of its region that will be open to the public. The purpose of this forum is to give the taxpayers the opportunity to ask questions of elected officials in regard to their municipalities' infrastructure. Even more important this gives the representatives of the municipalities the opportunity to explain what the issues are that they have to deal with and the resources they have to deal with the issues.

If you have any questions concerning these training sessions please contact Brian Paschen at 716-945-5301, or email bpaschen@southerntierwest.org. 