



Southern Tier West Newsletter

September 2025 www.southerntierwest.org



Upcoming Events

2025 Fall Planning & Zoning Training REGISTRATION FORM



Wednesday
November 5, 2025
4:00 - 8:15 PM

Southern Chautauqua Federal
Credit Union
168 E Fairmount Avenue
Lakewood, NY 14750
Dinner Catered by Elegant Edibles

Thursday
November 6, 2025
4:00 - 8:15 PM

Salamanca BOCES Center
1st Floor Conference Room
4039 Route 219
Salamanca, NY 14779
Dinner Catered by Subway

Registration fee includes a light box dinner that will be served as a "working dinner" at the beginning of session 2

Planning & Zoning Training – Fall 2025

Registration Now Open!

Fee: \$25 per attendee

Deadline: Oct. 27, 2025

Topics include renewable energy planning, planning fundamentals, and zoning introductions. Earn four hours of continuing education credit. Open to board members, officials, and municipal staff.



Southern Tier West 31st Annual Local Government Conference
June 4, 2026
Houghton University



Designed by Heather Rydzik in commissioned collaboration with

Carson Waterman (ribbon skirt pattern)

Samantha & Mary Jacobs (beadwork)

Mural to be installed on the side of the Valley Pharmacy in Gowanda. Funded by a NYS grant facilitated through Southern Tier West

Ribbon Cutting for Chautauqua County Murals

Join us this Saturday, 9/20/25, at 6 PM for a ribbon cutting celebrating four new murals!

Location: 123 Central Ave, Dunkirk, NY. Come see the art and support our vibrant community!

**Next Holiday: Columbus Day /
Indigenous Peoples' Day**
Date: Monday, October 13, 2025

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Message from the Executive Director

Dear Members of the Board,

I am honored to address you as the newly appointed Executive Director of Southern Tier West Regional Planning & Development Board, having officially assumed this role in May 2025. I am deeply grateful for the trust you have placed in me, and I remain firmly committed to advancing our mission and serving the communities of Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Chautauqua counties with diligence and integrity.

Organizational Transition

As you are aware, the organization is currently navigating a significant transitional phase. While I was eager to hit the ground running, I encountered some unforeseen operational challenges with the building and essential organizational processes and systems. While the transition process has not been as swift or seamless as hoped, I want to assure the Board that every effort is being made to resolve these matters. Additionally, we are still uncovering and addressing certain areas that were neglected or left incomplete in the prior administration.

Staff Excellence and Resilience

Despite these hurdles, I want to recognize and commend our dedicated staff. Their professionalism, flexibility, and unwavering commitment to serving our communities have been instrumental during this period of change. The team has stepped up to ensure continuity of services and has provided invaluable support as we work through these challenges together.

Commitment to Progress

My primary focus remains on restoring and enhancing the organization's capacity to serve effectively. We are systematically reviewing all ongoing initiatives, re-establishing access to necessary platforms, and prioritizing communication both internally and with our external partners. I am confident that, with continued teamwork and your support, we will soon overcome these transitional obstacles and position Southern Tier West for renewed growth and impact.

Thank you for your understanding, patience, and continued support as we work through this critical phase. I look forward to keeping you updated on our progress and to working collaboratively to fulfill the Board's vision for our region.

Respectfully,
Lisa Keck
Executive Director
Southern Tier West RP&DB

Community Support

New Employee Introduction: Jami Makaehu

We are excited to announce that Jami Makaehu has joined Southern Tier West as our new CSC/CEC Coordinator, effective September 3, 2025. Jami brings a strong administrative background and a positive, helping attitude to our team. In addition to her primary role, she will be overseeing both Baseline and GIS operations until further notice. Her experience and dedication make her a valuable addition, and we are confident she will make a significant impact in her new position. Please join us in welcoming Jami to STW! We are happy to have her here and look forward to all the great things she will bring to the organization.

Municipal Website Compliance .gov Transition

Southern Tier West is assisting municipalities in Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Chautauqua Counties with the transition to .gov domains, as required by NYS Bill No. A02852A.

- Current Status: Of 129 municipalities, 46 have confirmed .gov domains.
- We are committed to supporting the remaining communities to ensure state compliance.





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Economic Development Updates

Several initiatives have emerged from recent CEDS Action Groups and county partnerships:

Catalyst Collective: Funding is being pursued for a web-based regional entrepreneurial resource directory to connect local businesses with lenders, investors, and support.

Federal Partnerships: As the region's designated Economic Development

District for the EDA, Southern Tier West continues to guide applicants through EDA funding opportunities.

For EDA assistance, contact

Kimberly LaMendola:

klamendola@southerntierwest.org

or 716-945-5301 x2211.

Workforce Development: Butcher Trade Apprenticeship Approved

A historic milestone: NYS Department of Labor has approved the first agriculture-related Butcher Trade Apprenticeship. The program includes 6,000 hours of on-the-job training and covers a full range of skills. Next steps include recruiting apprentice hosts and the first cohort, alongside a grant proposal for outreach and marketing.

Recent Developments in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in New York State

New York State is actively investing in GIS technology, with recent advancements in data accessibility, emergency response, high-resolution imagery, and environmental planning. These initiatives are enhancing public services, supporting climate resilience, and encouraging data-driven decision-making across the state.

1. NYS GIS Clearinghouse Modernization
2. Next Generation 911 (NG911) GIS Integration
3. Statewide Orthophoto Program Updates
4. Environmental and Resilience Mapping Initiatives
5. Open Data and Public Engagement

Local Funding, Real Growth: STEDO can Help

Got a small business or startup in Allegany, Cattaraugus, or Chautauqua County? The Southern Tier West Planning Board has a great resource you should know about—the STEDO Revolving Loan Fund.

Whether you're just getting started or looking to expand, STEDO offers flexible, low-interest loans that can help cover the costs banks might not. It's all about supporting local businesses and helping our region grow—one good idea at a time.

Regional Baseline Program: Updates & Next Steps

We're keeping our baseline program aligned with the latest NYSERDA, Climate Smart Communities (CSC), and Clean Energy Communities (CEC) guidance. In the coming weeks, We will review new baseline data, updated methodologies, and improved open data tools to strengthen our regional work. Expect a brief update on key findings and next steps in our next newsletter. Stay tuned!



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\$2M POWER Grant Applicants Driving Community Revitalization

Jamestown Pursues ARC POWER Grant for Trades Training Program

**Collaboration Spotlight:
UPC & University of Pittsburgh**

Fredonia City Water System Renewal

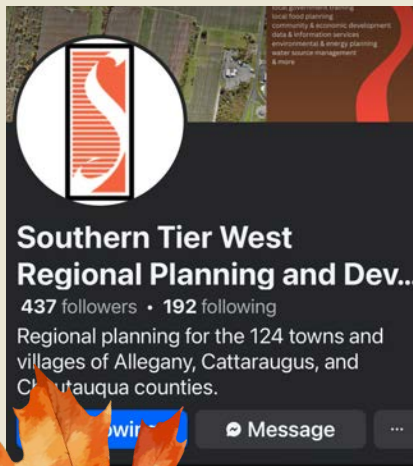
Steuben Rural Electric Cooperative Infrastructure Renewal Revitalizing Rural Communities

ACIDA Applies for POWER Grant to Build Arts Space in Belmont, NY

Seneca Nation Applies for POWER Grant - Entrepreneur Development

Celebrating Community Success

We were proud to attend ribbon cuttings for projects STW helped fund: a newly renovated counseling center at St. Stephen's Episcopal, made possible by an ARC area development grant, and public arts improvements in Sherman and Falconer, supported through NYS sponsorship. Congratulations to all involved!



Planning for the future and supporting your community as it grows.

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