2015 SESSIONS

Assessors
Flagg Hall

8:15 - 9:45 am — Session 1

Preparing Your Board of Assessment Review for Grievances
This seminar will focus on the relationship between Assessors and the Board of Assessment Review. This will include proper preparation, shared information, procedures, etc. Participants should be prepared to share their personal experiences as they relate to the Assessors and their role with the Board of Review.

9:45 - 10:15 am — Break

10:15 - 11:45 am — Session 2

Preparing Your Board of Assessment Review for Grievances continued

12:00 - 1:15 pm — Lunch and Keynote

1:30 - 3:00 pm — Session 3

Preparing Your Board of Assessment Review for Grievances continued
Sessions presented by Denise Trudell, IAO, Assessor for the Towns of Albion, Cape Vincent, Montague and Osceola, past president of the NYS Assessors’ Association; and Warren J. Wheeler, IAO, Assessor for the Towns of Hastings, Constantia, Richland and Boylston and current member of the NYS Assessors’ Association Executive Board.

Moderated by Jane Powers, IAO, Retired Director, St. Lawrence County Real Property Tax Service Agency and Darren Colton, IAO, Director, St. Lawrence County Real Property Tax Service Agency.
8:15 - 9:45 am — Session 1

**Real Estate Revaluation, Assessments and Taxes**

We will discuss how real estate assessments are developed, the assessment process and equalization rates, which is the relationship of assessed values to market values. Additionally, we will discuss the relationship of assessments to municipal tax levies and why updated assessments are important to both property owners and municipalities.

Presented by Robert E Koszarek, Consultant, KLW Appraisal Group.

Moderated by Mary Jane Watson, a founding partner of Pinto, Mucenski and Watson, CPA and Secretary/Treasurer of the Colton Fire District.

9:45 - 10:15 am — Break

10:15 - 11:45 am — Session 2

**Duties of Board Members**

In this session learn about fiscal oversight duties of the Board. This includes the purpose and responsibility for auditing the records of the chief fiscal officer, justice, clerk and other officials as well as which records must be presented for audit looking for fraud indicators.

Presented by Barbara Corrigan, Senior Examiner, NYS Office of the State Comptroller.

Moderated by David Button, Town of Canton Supervisor.

12:00 - 1:15 pm — Lunch and Keynote

1:30 - 3:00 pm — Session 3

**Committee on Open Government: Joint Board Members and Municipal Clerks Session**

Are you complying with open meeting laws? Do you know how many days you have to respond to a FOIL request? What is your responsibility under §103(a) Disclosure of Records Law? For what purpose can a board move into Executive Session? Bob Freeman is the world-renowned expert in Freedom of Information and the Open Meetings Law. Bring your questions to this always informative and lively session.

Presented by Robert Freeman, Executive Director, NYS Committee on Open Government.

Moderated by Cindy Goliber, Potsdam Town Clerk.
Budget & Finance

8:15 - 9:45 am — Session 1

New York State Economic and Fiscal Outlook

This session will focus on the direction of New York State fiscal policy including the growing income inequality, the regressive nature of our state and local tax structure, proliferation of economic development programs and tax credits, and projected state surpluses and structural deficits. It will also address stagnating wages and increases in service sector job growth across the state. This session will conclude by presenting policy solutions that the Fiscal Policy Institute has been advocating to address these issues.

Presented by Ron Deutsch, Executive Director, Fiscal Policy Institute.

Moderated by Peggy L. Mousaw, CMFO, Director of Budget and Finance, Cortland County.

9:45 - 10:15 am — Break

10:15 - 11:45 am — Session 2

Cyber-crime in Municipalities: A Clear and Present Danger

Today’s more frequent and pervasive IT security breaches, heightened regulatory environment and increased sensitivity and awareness to privacy, underscores the importance of a strong system of internal controls to mitigate the risks of cyber-attacks and data breaches. It’s not a matter of IF you will be breached, but when. Before a governmental entity can defend against cyber risks, it needs to first understand what they are. This session will expose those risks and examine the various current cyber threats, explore the regulatory landscape, discuss the key steps in establishing sound internal controls and lay out the critical path to a successful business continuity and incident response plan.

Presented by Thomas J. DeMayo, CISSP, CISA, CIPP/US CPT CEH CHFI MCSE, Director, IT Audit and Consulting O’Connor Davies, LLP.

Moderated by Rick Johnson, Information Technology Manager, St. Lawrence County.

12:00 - 1:15 pm — Lunch and Keynote

1:30 - 3:00 pm — Session 3

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Water and Sewer Operations

This session will provide attendees with information concerning the administration of municipal water and sewer systems, based upon those questions most frequently asked by local officials. Topics will include: rate setting; financing extensions and improvements; supplying services to outside users, termination of service; as well as other issues raised by attendees.

Presented by Barbara Van Epps, Deputy Director, NYS Conference of Mayors.

Moderated by Michael Weil, Local Government Planning Committee Member.
Register by calling (315) 267-2167 / 2538 or faxing the form to (315) 267-3350

8:15 - 9:45 am — Session 1

Record Keeping

Napoleon Bonaparte once said, “History is the version of past events that people have decided to agree upon.” The same is true of minutes, findings, and the decisions that are issued by planning boards and zoning boards of appeals. Department of State presenters will discuss why board members and support staff should strive to make records that are of value to enforcement personnel, applicants, municipal attorneys, and current and future boards. The course then turns its focus to the components of the record: minutes, findings, and the decision document.

Presented by Christopher Eastman, Manager, Land Use Training and Technical Assistance Program, NYS Department of State.

Moderated by Russ Lawrence, Code Enforcement Officer, Town of Canton.

9:45 - 10:15 am — Break

10:15 - 11:45 am — Session 2

Farmland Protection and Agricultural Viability

Farming communities face many challenges that threaten both the rural landscape and New York’s rich agricultural heritage. Development pressures to convert farmland and changes in the agricultural industry have resulted in a staggering loss of family farms and farmland, as well as agricultural support businesses. This course offers a two-tiered approach to farmland preservation: first, an overview of land use tools that can help protect farmland and preserve rural landscapes; and second, a look at strategies that support the local agricultural economy.

Presented by Christopher Eastman, Manager, Land Use Training and Technical Assistance Program, NYS Department of State.

Moderated by Russ Lawrence, Code Enforcement Officer, Town of Canton.

12:00 - 1:15 pm — Lunch and Keynote

1:30 - 3:00 pm — Session 3

Sign Regulation: Joint Code Enforcement and Planning and Zoning Session

The regulation of signs isn’t just a zoning issue—when regulating signage, municipalities must be careful not to violate free speech. This course reveals what municipalities may and may not regulate in commercial or non-commercial signage and explores how signage can be regulated for community aesthetics. The session also addresses the drafting of a sign control law; the content of local sign control regulations; regulating billboards and other off-premises signs; and eliminating nonconforming or undesirable signs.

Presented by Christopher Eastman, Manager, Land Use Training and Technical Assistance Program, NYS Department of State.

Moderated by Jason Pfotenhauer, Deputy Director, St. Lawrence County Planning Office and Russ Lawrence, Code Enforcement Officer, Town of Canton.
Community Development
Flagg Hall

8:15 - 9:45 am — Session 1
Strategies and Solutions for Revitalizing Brownfields in Your Community

Old gas stations and other known, or suspected, contaminated parcels can lay abandoned for years; they have a blighting influence on their communities, erode the tax base and impede development. Find out about methods and resources that are available to assess, clean-up and redevelop these sites. Presenters will discuss resources such as the NYS Oil Spill Fund, NYS DEC, NYS DOS, U.S. EPA and provide “real life” examples of brownfield success stories.

Presented by Gary Bowitch, Bowitch & Coffey, LLC; and Heidi Ames, Grants Manager, St. Lawrence County Planning Office.

9:45 - 10:15 am — Break

10:15 - 11:45 am — Session 2
Historic Preservation: How It Can Help With Community Development

Historic Preservation has long roots in American History. The first instance in the United States was in 1815, when Independence Hall in Philadelphia was saved from commercial development through citizen action. Today, historic preservation is recognized nationwide as a powerful force for community investment, redevelopment, and pride. Successful preservation initiatives are a result of solid planning by a municipality. This session will discuss the Certified Local Government Program (CLG), a nationwide initiative that directly links a community’s preservation goals to state and federal preservation programs. An outline of State Historic Preservation funding sources will also be presented.

Presented by Julian Adams, NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

12:00 - 1:15 pm — Lunch and Keynote

1:30 - 3:00 pm — Session 3
Agricultural Planning as a Community Development Tool

Local governments can have a leadership role in preserving their agricultural land base and promoting the economic health of their agricultural sector. This session will discuss some of the tools available to local governments that can create a positive environment for agriculture within their boundaries, including agriculture-friendly zoning, accommodating agri-tourism and other agriculture related business and support services. The St. Lawrence County Agricultural Development Plan will also be presented as a model for local governments to use when preparing a community plan. This session will review the Plan’s intent; the process used to secure funds; analyzing statistical trends; how the County solicited public input; engaging stakeholders; and the creation of strategies to advance the county’s agricultural industry. The session will also introduce the County’s online Agricultural Atlas.

Presented by Matilda Larson, St. Lawrence County Planning Office and George Frantz, Visiting Lecturer, Cornell University, Department of City & Regional Planning.

All sessions moderated by Dawn Mullaney, St. Lawrence County Planning Board.
8:15 - 9:45 am — Session 1

**Fiscal Responsibilities, Audit and Control**

What can you expect if your town or village is selected to be audited by the Office of the State Comptroller? This session will familiarize clerks with the entire audit process; from its early stages to the final report. Assuring the safety and accuracy of monies entrusted to the town or village clerk is critical to good government. Learn what the auditors are looking for in your minutes, the professional standards they follow, and your role in the process, so you will be prepared. A discussion of common findings and best practice recommendations will be addressed.

Presented by Laird Petrie, Associate Examiner, NYS Office of the State Comptroller.

Moderated by Lisa Hammond, Canton Town Clerk.

9:45 - 10:15 am — Break

10:15 - 11:45 am — Session 2

**Games of Chance and Bingo**

What is the clerk’s responsibility as the Licensing Agent for Gaming in your Town or Village? The Senior Investigators will review Articles 9-A and 14-H of the General Municipal Law (Games of Chance and Bingo Licensing Laws respectively). Registration, licensing and financial reporting requirements of both the clerk and the bona fide non-profit, authorized organizations conducting Bell Jars, Raffles, Vegas/Casino Games and Bingo will be discussed.

Presented by Richard Kuczynski, Senior Investigator; and Gary Grigalus, Senior Investigator from the NYS Office of Charitable Gaming.

Moderated by Cindy Goliber, Potsdam Town Clerk.

12:00 - 1:15 pm — Lunch and Keynote

1:30 - 3:00 pm — Session 3

**Committee on Open Government: Joint Municipal Clerks and Board Members Session**

Are you complying with open meeting laws? Do you know how many days you have to respond to a FOIL request? What is our responsibility under §103(a) Disclosure of Records Law? For what purpose can a board move into Executive Session? Bob Freeman is the world-renowned expert in Freedom of Information and the Open Meetings Law. Bring your questions to this always informative and lively session.

Presented by Robert Freeman, Executive Director, NYS Committee on Open Government.

Moderated by Cindy Goliber, Potsdam Town Clerk.
8:15 - 9:45 am — Session 1

**Hot Topics in Planning and Zoning**

Certain land use issues seem to cause more controversy than others. Topics that have been controversial of late will be addressed in this session and some guidance will be offered. Topics include agricultural uses in non-agricultural zones (chickens and more), group homes and other controversial uses in residential districts, and how to address grandfathered nonconforming uses.

Presented by Mark Gebo ESQ, Hrabchak and Gebo PC, Watertown, NY.
Moderated by Jason Pfotenhauer, Deputy Director, St. Lawrence County Planning Office.

9:45 - 10:15 am — Break

10:15 - 11:45 am — Session 2

**Conservation Subdivisions: What They Are and How They Differ From Conventional Land Subdivision**

Most Planning Board and some Zoning Boards of Appeal will address land subdivision in some way or another. There is a standard approach to dividing up land, but also an innovative way that can set your community apart and protect open space. Come and learn about various approaches to land subdivision.

Presented by Michale Glennon, PhD, Wildlife Conservation Society and Jason Pfotenhauer, Deputy Director, St. Lawrence County Planning Office.
Moderated by Jason Pfotenhauer, Deputy Director, St. Lawrence County Planning Office.

12:00 - 1:15 pm — Lunch and Keynote

1:30 - 3:00 pm — Session 3

**Sign Regulation: Joint Planning and Zoning and Code Enforcement Session**

The regulation of signs isn’t just a zoning issue — when regulating signage, municipalities must be careful not to violate free speech. This course reveals what municipalities may and may not regulate in commercial or non-commercial signage and explores how signage can be regulated for community aesthetics. The session also addresses the drafting of a sign control law; the content of local sign control regulations; regulating billboards and other off-premises signs; and eliminating nonconforming or undesirable signs.

Presented by Christopher Eastman, Manager, Land Use Training and Technical Assistance Program, NYS Department of State.
Moderated by Jason Pfotenhauer, Deputy Director, St. Lawrence County Planning Office and Russ Lawrence, Code Enforcement Officer, Town of Canton.
8:15 - 9:45 am — Session 1

**What is GIS and How Can it be Used to Manage Water/Wastewater Systems?**

This is an introduction to Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Participants will learn: fundamental spatial concepts, including coordinate systems and projections; what types of features can be mapped and where to source data; different ways to set up GIS and the advantages and disadvantages of each; and GIS resources in St. Lawrence County. This session will focus on GIS as a tool to manage municipal-owned infrastructure, especially water and wastewater infrastructure.

Presented by Star Carter, GIS Analyst, Development Authority of the North Country.

9:45 - 10:15 am — Break

10:15 - 11:45 am — Session 2

**Collecting and Maintaining Data with GIS**

Participants will learn about different GIS data collection techniques and how to use GIS to maintain infrastructure in the field. This session will include hands-on training with participants dividing into groups to locate and collect data at the SUNY Potsdam campus, using both mapping-grade and survey-grade GPS equipment. This exercise will simulate an annual water hydrant and sewer manhole inspection, teaching participants how to use GPS and GIS to locate features and update infrastructure details.

Presented by Christina Illingworth, GIS Technician, Development Authority of the North Country.

12:00 - 1:15 pm — Lunch and Keynote

1:30 - 3:00 pm — Session 3

**How is the North Country Using GIS?**

Case studies of how local municipalities have implemented GIS; and how GIS is used to manage water and sewer infrastructure; and how the Development Authority of the North Country and St. Lawrence County are using GIS to share information with the public. Participants will see practical examples of how GIS is currently used by the North Country local governments for asset management/planning, to locate buried infrastructure, manage and access as-built water/wastewater drawings, provide access to detailed records for sewer pipe lining projects, produce maps, access water/sewer district customer billing information, and much more.

Presented by Dr. Carrie Tuttle, Director of Engineering, Development Authority of the North Country.

All sessions moderated by Bob Henninger, Chief Operator, Village of Potsdam, Water/Wastewater Treatment and Hydro Electric Power Facilities.