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## 'Green loans' studied for homeowners

Tompkins planning chief pushes option to cut carbon emissions

By Stacey Shackford  
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Staff Writer

If Tompkins County is serious about reaching its target of an 80 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2050, it has to start by making millions of dollars worth of energy efficiencies to its residential housing stock, according to planners who are exploring ways to help homeowners finance such improvements.

County Planning Commissioner Ed Marx told members of the county Legislature's Planning, Development and Environmental Quality committee last week that a massive "green loan" program and energy

financing districts would go a long way toward meeting this goal.

But it would also come with a hefty price tag. In order to bring 23,000 households up to a higher standard of energy efficiency, the county would have to invest \$115 million within 25 years.

"The scale of this thing is not small. We are talking about over the course of 25 years, trying to impact half of the county's housing stock," Marx said.

First introduced to legislators a few months ago, a green loan program would finance energy efficiency home improvements for residents, who then pay the financing back in payments tied to their tax

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ED MARX  
Tompkins County  
planning commissioner

bills and assessed to be less than or equal to their estimated energy savings. The loan agreement is placed on the deed of the residence, and in the event of sale, it transfers

to the new owners.

The average loan would be around \$5,000, with annual repayments of about \$680 per year for 10 years, according to information provided by county planner Katie Borgella.

Marx said legislators could also consider special programs or incentives to encourage landlords to invest in energy improvements.

Starting such a program would require significant time from several departments, including planning, county administration, finance, county attorney, assessment and clerk, as well as community organizations such as Tompkins Community Action, Cornell Cooperative Extension, the Landlords Association and lending institutions. This aspect troubled legislator

Frank Proto, R-Danby and Caroline, who said county staff time was already too stretched due to budget constraints.

It would likely require additional staff as well, ideally starting with two people and growing to three in year 5, with four in year 6 and beyond, Borgella said. But it could also create or retain an additional 50 jobs locally, she added.

"The initial costs of launching a new program could be reduced by success in obtaining a grant to cover start-up costs," she wrote. "Such a grant could reduce the amount of time before loan repayments cover all administrative costs — from nine years to six years, assuming a grant of \$350,000."

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### WHERE ITHACA'S WILD THINGS ARE

## Animals find safe place to recover at Ithaca sanctuary



KRISY GASHLER / Staff Photo

Wildlife rehabilitator Victoria Campbell distributes the morning meal at the clinic adjoining her home in the Town of Ithaca. Campbell has run the Wild Things Sanctuary for sick and injured wildlife since January 2008 through donations.

## Woman runs rehab clinic at home

By Liz Lawyer  
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Staff Writer

Things are quieter at Wild Things Sanctuary now that baby season is over, but things still get hectic during feeding time.

There are three young squirrels that need exercise, using the whole room — including the people in it — as their jungle gym during the morning feeding. And there are seven growing possums, most of them nearly ready to strike out on their own, peering out from under the blanket where they have spent the night curled into one furry ball.

Victoria Campbell, a state-licensed wildlife rehabilitator, can tell the brief life stories of each of them — the squir-

### IF YOU FIND AN INJURED ANIMAL

- ▶ Do not hold or feed the animal.
- ▶ Keep the animal in a dark, quiet place to keep it calm.
- ▶ Keep pets away.
- ▶ Do not move baby animals; mothers often leave their babies for a length of time while foraging.

### CONTACT INFO

- ▶ Wild Things Clinic: 200-4100 or wildthingsanctuary.org
- ▶ Wildlife Health Center at Cornell University: 253-3060

rels came in with a pox that left lesions all over their bodies, while the possums came from three separate litters, rescued from their mothers' pouches after each was struck by cars.

This year, Campbell's sanctuary has seen nearly 200 animal patients, including not only squirrels and possums, but rabbits, mice, birds, woodchucks, raccoons, deer and skunks; just about every type of animal living in the woods around Ithaca has come through her door. Earlier this year, she handled a squirrel with developmental problems, a gull discovered at Ithaca High School with a broken leg and shoulder, and a brood of baby mourning doves.

Treating wildlife is not a lucrative business, but Campbell's been doing it full-time since early 2008.

"I'm not under any illusions that I am changing the world, but it's a life, so it's worth it," she said. "People say, 'It's just a squirrel. There are so many squirrels.' Coming from a human, that's

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## Cornell U. administration posts revamped

Moves expected to save \$2 million

By Liz Lawyer  
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Staff Writer

Three empty positions in Cornell University's upper administration have been eliminated, along with several vacant positions in three administrative offices, the university announced Tuesday.

The elimination of the positions will cut more than \$2 million in administrative costs per year, according to the university's projections.

The positions of executive vice president, vice president for risk management and public safety, and vice provost for life sciences were cut and the responsibilities of each office divided up among other administrators.

"We made these decisions after a careful analysis of each of the key positions in the central administration, a thorough review of benchmarks from peer institutions, and substantive discussions with key leaders of those universities," Cornell President David Skorton said. "By reducing layers in our organization, we will be able to operate more efficiently and cost-effectively. This initiative will set an example for other entities within the Cornell campus."

Three other positions under the provost, all vacant, were cut in July, including the vice provost for equity and inclusion, the associate provost for outreach and the senior science adviser.

Provost Kent Fuchs will "continue to review the structure of his office and expects additional changes to be made by the end of the academic year," according to a statement released by the university Tuesday afternoon.

Two new administrative teams were created to address the oversight and coordina-

"By reducing layers in our organization, we will be able to operate more efficiently and cost-effectively."

DAVID SKORTON  
Cornell president

tion of information technology across the Ithaca campus and to facilitate university communications to its various constituencies.

The first, called the Information Technology Governance Committee, is made up of several existing administrative positions and is responsible for the campus-wide guidance of IT budgeting and planning.

The second, called University Relations, is made up of several top administrators and the newly created role of vice president for university relations, which will be filled by Dean of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions Glenn Altschuler, who will continue in that role while serving as vice president. The group will "coordinate the various administrative functions responsible for Cornell's relations with its complex array of publics," the statement said.

The changes will take effect Nov. 1.

As have many other universities, Cornell has had to deal with a declining value of its invested endowment, notably a 27 percent decline in the last six months of 2008, as well as reduced state support for the state-affiliated colleges, a structural operating deficit and less money from donations. It has had more than 100 layoffs and offered early-retirement incentives among other cost-saving measures.

# WILDLIFE

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the most ridiculous argument ever.”

Campbell runs the clinic out of a room built onto her home in the Town of Ithaca. She raised more than \$4,000 in a stunt publicized online in which she shaved her head and sold her hair, but with the busy season for wildlife rehabbers over and funds ebbing low, she will be going into fundraising mode, she said.

Wildlife rehabilitators are required to have a state-issued license, though they are not required to have the skill set of a veterinarian or a veterinary technician. Campbell said she and the vets at Cornell University's Wildlife Health Center often bring each other patients, Campbell running an animal up to Cornell when its injuries are beyond her medical expertise, and Cornell calling her when an animal has been

treated and just needs a safe place to recuperate before being released.

Many of her patients come to Wild Things Sanctuary that way, she said. Others are dropped off by well-meaning citizens who tried a rescue on their own, but couldn't handle an animal or didn't know what to feed it.

“The best thing is to call somebody who can walk you through it,” she said.

But even the experts don't have 100 percent luck saving injured or too-young wildlife.

“I never know what I'm going to get in here. Sometimes people bring in birds this big,” she said, holding up her cupped hand, “and they'll say, ‘I'm so glad you can save it and know what to do.’ And I'm like — ‘Well, I'm going to do my best.’”

George Kollias, a vet at the Wildlife Health Center at Cornell and a professor of wildlife medicine, said hospitals and vets in private practice often work hand-in-hand with wildlife rehabbers to care for injured animals.

Though a wildlife rehabber cannot perform surgery or prescribe medicine, he said

the service they provide in preparing animals to return to the wild is invaluable.

“The goal is to return animals to the wild,” Kollias said. “There's limited space, and with animals in permanent captivity you run into issues of nutrition and long-term care.”

When Campbell releases an animal, she does a “soft release;” she puts out food for a short period of time to help them adjust. For the animals currently in the clinic, she keeps the temperature in the room at about 55 degrees, to help them acclimatize to the cool weather.

Campbell said she has had animals return to the clinic after having full recoveries. One squirrel she released returned when her teeth (which continue to grow throughout a squirrel's life) grew crookedly and prevented her from eating. Another returned when she had a litter of babies and needed help getting enough food.

“I feel like there's a word out on the street in the woods, that this is the place to come when you're hurt or sick,” she said.

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## Obituaries

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