



CoMPAS rates increasing in January

During the budget meeting held in June, the Morganton City Council approved a cable television rate increase effective January 1, 2016.

The rate for Basic Cable is increasing \$3.00. As of Jan. 1, Basic Cable will cost \$70.95 a month.

The increase is again due to increasing programming costs CoMPAS must pay to various broadcasters to carry channels.

<http://bit.ly/1OoAjVI>



Thompson wants to see economic growth

Morganton Mayor Ronnie Thompson said he looks forward to seeing Morganton grow and prosper, and he looks forward to hearing from the community about how to continue improving the city. Thompson was sworn in to serve his first term as Mayor in December.

Thompson grew up in Valdese and earned a degree in economics from UNC Chapel Hill. He and his wife Anne have two daughters. After university, Thompson worked for a crafts cooperative with Blue Ridge Community Action, and then in personnel at Western Carolina Center and the NC School for the Deaf. He then joined the family business, Thompson Realty.

Thompson isn't a newcomer to local government. In 1988, he was elected to serve on the Burke County Board of Commission. He served one term from 1988 to 1992. Thompson said he got involved in county government because he didn't think

the Commissioners at the time were concerned about protecting the Henry River.

"The Commission was asked to designate the river as an Outstanding Resource, and they refused to debate the issue," Thompson said. "I decided that if I wanted to make a difference, I needed to get out of the cheap seats and get involved."

In 2013, Thompson got back into local government when he was elected to the City Council. He said he missed being involved in local government, because that's where citizens can truly make a difference. Thompson considered waiting for the previ-

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Ronnie Thompson
Mayor

Scams & ID Theft seminar a success

About 50 people attended the Scams and ID Theft seminar hosted at the Morganton-Burke Senior Center Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2015.

Caroline Farmer, an attorney with Victims and Citizens Services division of the NC Department of Justice, gave a presentation on scams and identity theft, and how people can protect themselves online and over the phone.

The first thing Farmer encouraged everyone to do is to get a free "security freeze" on their credit reports. The security freeze stops credit bureaus from release any

information about someone to new creditors without the person's approval. Mayor Ronnie Thompson asked City staff to work with the Attorney General's office to schedule the seminar.

"Identity theft is one of the most critical financial issues that all people face, and I want to encourage everyone to attend this seminar and learn how to protect themselves at no-cost," Thompson said. "This is a very good program offered by the NC Attorney General, and it's free for residents."

Full story at <http://bit.ly/1Yywt10>



Caroline Farmer, left, an attorney with Victims and Citizens Services division of the NC Department of Justice, answers a question after the scams and ID theft seminar.

CoMMA's MainStage Season 30 continues

There are a lot of great shows left in CoMMA's MainStage Season 30!

Tales of Buddy Holly and Joseph and his coat. Great musical acts. Comedies. And of course The Show 4!

Call 433-SHOW and get your tickets today!

"BUDDY"

The Buddy Holly Story
National Broadway Tour
Sunday, Jan. 10, 3:00 pm

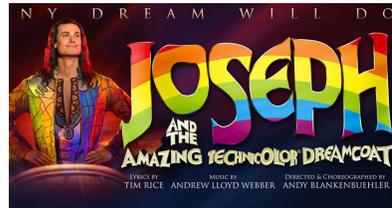


THE HOT SARDINES

Thursday, Jan. 28, 7:30 pm

"JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT"

National Broadway Tour
Thursday Feb. 18, 7:30 pm



JOHNNY RIVERS

Thursday, March 3, 7:30 pm

"VANITES"

National Tour

Friday, March 18, 7:30 pm

Visit www.commaonline.org for more details!



THE SHOW 4

Tuesday, April 5, 7:30 pm

"ONCE"

National Broadway Tour
Wednesday, May 4, 7:30 pm

MAYOR

From the front

ous District 4 Councilman to retire, but he ultimately decided to go ahead and run after being encouraged by many people to seek the office.

"I did not want to wait until I was 75 or 80 years old to get elected," Thompson said.

During his first two years on the Council, Thompson was able to achieve one of his goals, to change the City's election from October to November. He also hopes to get the public comment period of the Council meeting televised and included in the live broadcast.

"We are not required to show the comments on television, but I feel this opens up government to the community," Thompson said. "I realize this has the potential to allow some people to air their personal grievances, but I hope they will make comments about areas of concern in city government."

Thompson also wants to focus on Broughton and some areas outside of down-

town Morganton. He said that he hopes the city can address some dilapidated buildings and leave a better impression of Morganton for visitors who are leaving the city.

"When you leave downtown, there are areas that need improving and have needed that improvement for many, many years," Thompson said. "The largest goal is to make sure that the Broughton Hospital property is used to its highest economic potential. We will be working with the state and county government to make sure that this development will be an economic boost to that area of Morganton and Burke County."

Thompson said he wants the citizens to know that he doesn't have a fixed agenda. He believes that the City has a very capable and talented staff, and he wants to allow staff to be more creative in addressing issues facing Morganton. He does, however, want public input.

"If you have a good idea that helps the community grow, I am interested

in hearing about your plan," Thompson said. "Some plans the city government cannot do. The private sector has to make those plans happen, but I am approachable and not afraid to think outside the box."

When asked what he would highlight if making a 30-second commercial selling Morganton, Thompson said that it would take a lot more than 30 seconds to share all the great things the City has to offer.

"We have what I believe is the best downtown in North Carolina," Thompson said. "I have visited 51 other cities and towns in western North Carolina as a part of my Rotary duties, and there is no comparison."

"We have a greenway that I hope will soon be connected to downtown. We have recreational facilities that are the envy of many towns. We have new restaurants and breweries that are attracting people from out of town. We have an active Arts Council, an unbelievable History Museum, and a municipal auditorium with a fresco. We have an

active deaf community that will soon have a very special place to live and enjoy retirement. And we are close to the mountains and close to three major airports."

"That could not be a 30-second commercial."

Thompson has been involved with the Valdese Rotary Club since 2000. He is involved with the local, state, and national Realtors. He was President of the Burke County Board of Realtors for three terms, and he also served as President of the NC Association of Realtors. He served as president of the Burke County Chamber of Commerce in 1995 and served on the Chamber board of directors from 1990 to 1996. Thompson also served on the initial Board of Directors for Habitat for Humanity and the state Smart Start Board.

His other civic involvement and achievements include serving with the Boy Scouts of America, receiving the North Carolina Order of the Long Leaf Pine in 1985, and carrying the Olympic Torch in 1996.