



CITY PRIDE

MORGANTON, NC

September 2014 • Morganton's Citizen Newsletter



Zoning rewrite moving ahead

The City of Morganton is writing new zoning regulations that will guide development in Morganton during the next 10 to 20 years. The City will hold several public meetings to receive feedback from local property owners and businesses about the proposed changes.

Zoning Project Calendar

Planning and Zoning and City Council Workshop
Sept. 11, 2014 3 pm - 6 pm

Planning and Zoning Public Hearing
Oct. 9, 2014 5:15 pm - 7:15 pm

City Council Public Hearing
Tentatively Scheduled for
Nov. 3, 2014 6 pm - 8 pm

These changes will impact every property owner in Morganton. Information about the project is available online at www.ci.morganton.nc.us/zoningupdate. Residents can read about major changes being proposed, review the draft zoning ordinance, check out an interactive map, and submit comments.

Morganton City Council

- Mel Cohen, Mayor
- John H. Cantrell, Mayor Pro Tem
- Forrest A. Fleming
- S. Sidney Simmons
- Ronnie Thompson

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Fire engineers stay busy in the field

Fire service duties are a lot different today than they were 30 years ago, and the City of Morganton's fire department is different than many other departments across the country.

The City of Morganton operates what is known as a Public Safety Department, which combines police and fire services into one agency. Under the Public Safety model, officers serve as policemen and firemen. When a building catches fire, Public Safety fire trucks and patrol cars are going to arrive on the scene, because they are one in the same.

To help speed up the department's response to fire calls, Public Safety employs four fire engineers per shift and a fire services captain. The primary job of the fire engineer is to drive their fire truck to the scene of a fire call as fast and as safely possible. So, when fire engineers go out into the community to take care of routine work, they take their trucks with them.

Fire engineers also handle the majority of the routine, day-to-day fire service duties: fire engineers maintain the fire



Public Safety Fire Engineer Danny Lyle sits in the Q-1. Fire engineers perform the majority of the day-to-day fire services duties in Morganton, and they keep themselves and their trucks busy.

trucks; maintain fire equipment including pumps, ladders, hoses, and breathing apparatus; clean and maintain the Public Safety stations; create fire response preplans for local businesses, churches, and schools; test and maintain fire hydrants; and teach fire prevention education at local schools.

"Whether you are a traditional fire department or a public safety department, the same jobs must be done," said Public Safety Sgt. Robin Triplett. "Since we use the Public Safety model, we have to allocate our manpower differently than traditional fire

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Utility rates change with new budget

The Morganton City Council unanimously approved the City of Morganton 2014-2015 Budget in June of this year. The budget includes some increases in rates.

Electric Rates

The City is increasing electric rates by 2.3 percent. The increase is needed to offset wholesale power rate increases the City pays to its power provider. For the average all-electric residential customer the increase should equal about 7 cents a day or \$2.19 per month.

In addition to the City's rate increase, the State of North

Carolina also increased the sales tax rate on electricity. As part of the North Carolina Tax Simplification and Reduction Act, the North Carolina General Assembly increased state sales tax on electricity to 7 percent, up from 3 percent.

Water Rates

The City also increased the water rate. The per 1,000 gallon volume charge for water will increase by 10 cents. A household inside the City using 5,000 gallons of water a month will pay 50 cents more a month or \$6.00 more per year. Outside customers

continue to pay double the inside rates.

CoMPAS Rates

In addition to the electric and water rate increases, rates for CoMPAS television and Internet services will also increase.

In order to provide better service to customers, CoMPAS recently completed an upgrade to its high-speed internet system, and starting August 1, 2014, all CoMPAS Internet customers will receive the minimum Internet speed of 10/2 Mbps; that is 10 Mbps

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Fire Engineers

From the front

departments and we have to use our fire services equipment differently as well.”

In a traditional fire department, one fire engine would be staffed with at least four firefighters; that unit is called a “company”. That company would work together to perform routine duties, and they would all ride together in their fire engine. But it’s a bit different in Morganton.

“In Morganton, we have one fire engineer per truck, so if we need three or four people to do a job, then we have to take out three or four fire trucks,” Triplett said.

Currently, the City’s fire engineers have more than 1,400 locations in Morganton that they have to preplan, and there are more than 1,100 fire hydrants that must be maintained and 20 percent of those must be flow tested every year.

Many times, if a fire truck is at business, a fire engineer is doing a preplan for the business. During the preplan, the fire engineer gathers information about utilities, electric service, natural gas, emergency exits,

building size, and water flows, so that Public Safety can be better prepared to respond to a fire at that location.

Fire Engineer Danny Lyle said residents often wonder why fire trucks are out and about in the City and why two or three fire trucks may be at one location, but that is the nature of being a Public Safety agency.

“People may think it is overkill to have three or four fire trucks at one location, but that’s just how we’re set up,” Lyle said. “We could take one fire engineer and three Public Safety Officers to do the work, but then we would have taken three officers off patrol to perform routine fire service duties.”

Whether a resident calls because their fire alarm or carbon monoxide alarm is beeping, or they want Public Safety to perform a home safety survey, or if they just need help. Public Safety will answer the call.

“We want Morganton residents to know that we are here for them,” Lyle said. “If someone needs help, we’ll help. We’re available whenever our residents need us.”

Watch a video about the fire engineers here: <http://youtu.be/PiEl5o2Y3l4>

Holiday events in the City

Spooky Meadows Hayride

Wednesday - Friday
Oct. 29 to Oct. 31
7:00 to 10:00 pm

Come to Catawba Meadows Park on Halloween and rediscover the thrills and chills of a Halloween! This fun event is free, but be warned, you may get spooked! Free Coffee, Hot Chocolate & Popcorn!

Halloween Spooktacular

Friday • Oct. 31 • 3 - 6 pm

Join the myriad of imps, ghouls, princesses, heroes and more in Downtown Morganton for the annual Downtown Trick-or-Treating and Halloween Carnival. Trick-or-treating is from 3:00 to 5:00 pm, and games and food will be available on the Old Courthouse Square until 6:00 pm.

Memorial Tree Lighting

Saturday • Nov. 22 • 5:30 pm

The Memorial Tree Lighting Ceremony will begin at 5:30pm with music and to the delight of all, at 6:00pm, downtown Morganton will light up for the season.

Holiday Farmers Market

Saturday • Nov. 22 & Dec. 13
12 noon - 5:00 pm

Just in time for your holiday events, stop by for fresh vegetables, baked goods & crafts! The Holiday Market is located at 111 North Green Street, at the corner of Green Street and Avery Avenue.

Christmas Parade

Tuesday • Dec. 2 • 6 pm

Please join the Morganton Downtown Development Association as they present the Downtown Morganton Christmas Parade! The parade is rain or shine!

Breakfast with Santa

Saturday • Dec. 6 & Dec. 13
8:30 - 10 am

The annual Breakfast with Santa is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 6 and 13, at 8:30 am or 10 am. Come and enjoy a wonderful pancake breakfast at the Community House, located at 120 N. King Street, and visit with your favorite characters, Mrs. Claus, Santa’s elves, other special guests, and of course, Santa. Call 438-5252 to purchase tickets. Tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for children.

Please Pick Up After Your Pet.

Pet owners shall not allow their pets to defecate in any public park, playground, greenway, ballfield, street, sidewalk or parking area unless the owner immediately removes the waste.

It is also unlawful for owners to allow their pets to defecate on any property other than the pet owner’s property.

For more information, see Morganton City Code Sec. 8-2022 (a) & (b)(5).



Rates

From the front

download and 2 Mbps upload. All customers will be upgraded to this minimum 10/2 Mbps speed that costs \$39.95 a month.

Residents can get a \$10.00 discount on Internet service when bundled with Voice,

CoMPAS’ telephone service.

In addition to the Internet rates, CoMPAS will increase television rates in January 2015 to cover continued increasing programming costs. Broadcast Basic will increase by \$1.50 to \$25.45 per month. Basic Cable will increase by \$4.00 to \$67.95 a month.



Stay up-to-date with what’s happening in your local government by visiting www.ci.morganton.nc.us

