

## Morganton in top 50 safe cities

Morganton moved up the ranks of SafeWise's list of the 50 Safest Cities in North Carolina for 2015. Morganton ranked 37th on the list, up from 41st last year, with a rate of only 2.78 violent crimes per 1,000 residents and 29.13 property crimes per 1,000.

Find out who made the Top 10 by visiting <http://bit.ly/mgatop50>.



## Water heater care tips

There are several easy and inexpensive ways to increase a water heater's efficiency and longevity. You can add insulation and set the temperature, things that only have to be done once, and you can perform annual maintenance such as flushing the tank and checking the anode rod. Insulation can reduce heat

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## Get fit on the greenway!

Are you ready to try some vault-overs, arm-walks, and body-tucks? Then head to the Catawba River Greenway and try out the new fitness trail!

The new \$15,000 fitness trail was donated by the Morrison Family, owners of Molded Fiber Glass Companies (MFG). Dean Justus, Human Resources Manager for MFG North Carolina, located here in Morganton, said the management team at the Morganton plant came up with the idea as a way to support health and wellness in the community.

"We wanted to do a project that would benefit our team-

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From left to right are City Councilman Forrest Fleming, Mayor Mel Cohen, MFG NC Human Resources Manager Dean Justus, Parks and Recreation intern Ethan Anderson, Parks and Recreation Director Gary Leonhardt, City Councilman Ronnie Thompson, City Councilman Sidney Simmons, and MFG NC Senior General Manager Joe Wilk. <http://bit.ly/mgafittrail>

## Council approves budget

The Morganton City Council approved the City's 2015-2016 Fiscal Year budget after holding a public hearing June 22, 2015.

The 2015-2016 budget contains no tax increase, no increase in the garbage fee, no increase in water rates, no increase in sewer rates, and no increases in internet fees or phone service fees. Electric rates will decrease by an average of 2 percent. The City property tax rate will remain at .53 cents.

The general fund contains \$4.4 million in funding for capital improvement projects including resurfacing of streets; resurfacing sections

of the greenway; parking lot paving at CoMMA and Public Safety; building improvements, parking lot additions and additional hard surface courts at the Mountain View Recreation Center; the next phase of the City's Wayfinding Program; new patrol cars for Public Safety; and new vehicles for Public Works.

The City Council also approved borrowing just over \$1 million dollars from First Citizens Bank to fund several of those capital projects. The City will repay those funds at 1.6% interest over four and a half years.

The budget contains a 1.5

percent cost of living increase for City employees and a one percent merit fund. Although City employees have been doing more with less for the last several years, they have not received merit raises since 2008, and City directors and supervisors believe that being able to reward employees who consistently perform beyond expectations is essential to keeping a well-trained and motivated workforce. More than 37 city positions still remain unfilled.

Read Sandy's full budget message and review the full budget online at [www.morgantonnc.gov/opengov](http://www.morgantonnc.gov/opengov). <http://bit.ly/fy1516>.

## WATER

*From the front*

loss by up to 45 percent and can shave as much as 9 percent off water-heating costs. Flushing your water heater tank can improve efficiency and longevity. Maintaining the anode rod can help prevent the tank from rusting out.

Check your water heater user manual for instructions on how to perform the following maintenance tasks.

### 1. TEST THE TPR VALVE

The TPR valve opens if the tank pressure gets too high, and it's important that the valve is working properly.

### 2. CHECK THE ANODE ROD

The anode rod prevents the water tank from rusting and leaking.

### 3. DRAIN THE TANK AND WASH OUT SEDIMENT

Draining sediment from the water tank can improve efficiency.

### 4. ADJUST THE TEMP

For every 10 degrees the temperature is lowered, you can expect to save up to 5 percent in energy costs. Turn the water heater off or the thermostat down to its lowest setting if you plan to be away from home for more than three days.

### 5. INSULATE HOT WATER PIPES

Insulating the pipes that carry hot water throughout your home helps reduce heat loss and saves energy.



## Councilmen and city staff donate blood

Councilman Sidney Simmons, middle, and city employee Sybil Burnett, right, were happy to donate blood during a recent blood drive held at Morganton City Hall. A total of 34 people donated blood during the drive including 19 city employees!

<http://bit.ly/415blooddrive>

## Water plant staff receives award

The City of Morganton Water Treatment Plant staff recently received an award from the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR) for providing high-quality drinking water to Morganton residents.

The award was given by NCDENR's Division of Water Resources as part of the North Carolina Area Wide Optimization Program (AWOP). "I am very proud of the water treatment plant staff for their efforts to ensure that the citizens of Morganton have the highest purity drinking water possible," said Brad Boris, Water Resources Department Director. "They are a team that is very dedicated to providing



From left to right are Water Resources Director Brad Boris; Randy Hintz, NCDENR Asheville Regional Office; Water Treatment Plant Superintendent Jason Green, and Drew Foy, Water Treatment Plant Lab Supervisor.

outstanding customer service and a quality product 24 hours

a day, 365 days a year!"  
<http://bit.ly/mgaawop>

## GET FIT!

*From the front*

mates and the community," Justus said. "I knew we had a great greenway, and I thought we could make it even better by adding exercise stations."

Joe Wilk, Senior General

Manager of MFG North Carolina, proposed the idea to the Morrison Family, and the family agreed to fund the project. The Morrison Family funds various community programs at their factory locations across North America.

"The exercise stations donated by the Morrison foundation

are another example of MFG's commitment to our teammates and to the Morganton community," Wilk said. "MFG truly values the health and safety of our teammates. These exercise stations will help enhance the opportunities for a healthy lifestyle here in Morganton."

<http://bit.ly/mgafittrail>