

Winter on the
Historic Courthouse Square



CITY PRIDE

MORGANTON, NC



January 2012

Citizen Newsletter

Know Where It Goes

The No. 1 source of water pollution in North Carolina is caused by stormwater pollution.

When it rains, the rain picks up whatever you put on the yard or road and runs into the storm drain. The storm drains carry the polluted rainwater directly to nearby creeks and streams, and eventually into the Catawba River where Morganton gets its water.

Many people unknowingly pollute the river and our water supply, but a few small changes can make a big difference.

Don't over-fertilize your yard. Don't pour leftover paint or chemicals onto grass, roads or into drains. Wash your car on grass. Pick up after your pet.



Johnny Fishpatrick

You are the solution now that you
'Know Where It Goes'

My Utilities

Did you know that City utility customers can view account information and pay utility bills on the Internet?

Visit the City's website and click the 'My Utilities' link at the top right of the web page to register.



www.ci.morganton.nc.us

Morganton City Council

- Mel Cohen, Mayor
- Dr. Alfred Hamer Jr., Mayor Pro Tem
- John H. Cantrell
- Forrest A. Fleming
- S. Sidney Simmons

citymayor@ci.morganton.nc.us
citycouncil@ci.morganton.nc.us

www.ci.morganton.nc.us

Simmons ready to serve Morganton

Newly sworn-in Councilman Sidney Simmons said he is ready to serve Morganton residents and keep the City tax rate as low as possible.

"I made everyone a promise that I will work to the best of my ability to maintain the City services we are used to at the lowest possible tax rate," Simmons said. "We have to look at other ways of generating revenues than always going back to that property owner, and I think we have to find a good balance of funding."

In 1947, when Simmons was just one-year-old, his father moved the family from McDowell County to Morganton to open a grocery store, the Burke Food Center, and Simmons has been here ever since. Simmons graduated from Pleasant Gardens

High School and then studied civil engineering at Gaston Tech.

In 1970 Simmons went to work for the NC State Highway Department and later moved to the DMV Driver's License Division. Simmons was promoted several times until he became the regional supervisor for Western North Carolina. Simmons retired from that position in 1995.

Simmons said he has always had an interest in local government and decided to run



Simmons

See **SIMMONS** on Page 2



Call 433-SHOW for more details and ticket information or visit www.commaonline.org!

"Elvis Lives"

Saturday Jan. 14 • 7:30 pm

By special permission from Elvis Presley Enterprises...Four memorable eras, four fabulous Elvis performers, forever shared for the entire world!

ELVIS LIVES is a Broadway style pulse-racing, multi-media journey across Elvis' life, featuring the finalists from Elvis Presley Enterprises Worldwide Ultimate Elvis Tribute Artist Contest. Audiences "Can't Help Falling in Love" with this phenomenal theatrical concert experience.

Alice Tan Ridley

Friday Jan. 27 • 7:30 pm

Alice Tan Ridley was born in Georgia into a musical family of nine siblings and has been

See **MAIN STAGE** on Page 2

Leaf collection ends in January

The City of Morganton collects leaves from October through January at no extra charge to residents. **After January, loose leaves will be picked up for a \$25.00 fee.**

Please pile leaves as close to the road as possible without blocking the road, sidewalks or storm drains.

The City no longer provides leaf bags. Loose-leaf collection is much more efficient, saves money and eliminates unnecessary plastic bag waste. Call 438-5248 for more information.

American Roller Bearing creating 231 new jobs

American Roller Bearing Industries Inc. (A.R.B.), a manufacturer of anti-friction bearings for industrial equipment, recently announced it will expand its operations in Burke and Alexander counties. A.R.B. expects to create 231 new jobs over the next five years and invest between \$3 million and \$5 million per year in land, buildings, machinery and equipment. The announcement was made possible in part by a state Job Development Investment Grant and economic incentive grants from the City of Morganton and Burke County.

During the announcement in Morganton City Hall in December, A.R.B. President Ben



Succop said the state grant made it possible to expand the company and put another 231 people to work in the area. Succop also announced that A.R.B. had purchased the Rexnord Facility on Chain Drive in Morganton, as

See **ARB EXPANDS** on Page 2

Whisnant retires from City Council

Larry Whisnant voted in his last Council meeting in November, after 16 years serving as a Morganton City Councilman.

During a recent City Council meeting, Whisnant said that it had been his honor to serve Morganton and its residents.

"I'd like to thank everybody that supported me over the years," Whisnant said. "It's been a pleasure, and I'm going to miss everybody."

Whisnant first started working for the City of Morganton in the early 1960s in the Public Safety Department. He retired from Public Safety in 1994, and was elected to his first term on the City Council in 1995.

While serving four consecutive terms on the Council, Whisnant said it was always obvious that the Council always had the same goal.

"This whole body has one thing in mind, and that's the betterment of this community," Whisnant said. "The only thing we ever disagree on is, 'How do we get there?'"

Whisnant said he was also thankful for and appreciated the hard work and dedication of City employees.

"Our employees in the past several years have had to do more with less and they have stepped up to the plate, every person, and have done that. They make us look good," Whisnant said.

Although he will no longer be serving on the Council, Whisnant said he plans to remain active in the community and work for the benefit of Morganton residents.

"If I am going to be remembered for anything, I'd like to be remembered as someone who made a difference in the community," Whisnant said.



Whisnant

MainStage Morganton

From the front

captivating audiences since she was 3 years old. In 1992, Alice began singing in the subways in New York: 14th Street Union Square, 34th Street Herald Square and, the famous 42nd Street Times Square.

Like Aretha Franklin, Etta James, Diana Ross and Tina Turner she is a long lasting Goddess of Soul, with enough personality, talent and a touch of funk to prove to be an unforgettable performer.

Boom Town

Sunday Feb. 26 • 3:00 pm

Be transported to the 1860's small frontier town of Rosebud, where two ambitious saloon owners set up shop in the hopes

of cashing in on the town's gold rush frenzy. A circus ensues when they feud for the townsfolk's patronage that leads to a series of explosive events, exciting brawls, an unexpected romance and a lucrative discovery.

Boom Town takes you beyond the town and deep into the mine to join in the excitement of exploration and experience the thrill of discovery.

Women of Ireland

Thursday March 15 • 7:30 pm

The spellbinding talents of the Irish female performer are superbly brought to light on stage by the Women of Ireland. Comprised of three vocalists, they add life to an already dazzling show.

This innovative and exciting full stage concert production showcases the next generation of Ireland's leading performers. Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Simmons

From the front

for the Council at the suggestion of former Councilman Larry Whisnant.

"Larry approached me and said, 'You need to run in my place,' Simmons said. "I thought about it

and decided that since I'm retired, I needed to get actively involved, and that's the reason I ran for the Council."

Simmons and his wife, Brenda, have been married 45 years; they have two daughters, who are also married and live here in Morganton, and three grandchildren.

ARB Expands

From the front

part of the expansion.

"Since coming to North Carolina in 1980, our company has thrived in this foothills region, enabling us to expand our workforce from 50 workers to 400 workers in the last 31 years," Succop said. "We look forward to continuing our long-standing partnerships ... This grant will enable us to strengthen our operations and to support the needs of our customers."

Morganton Mayor Mel Cohen said American Roller Bearing has made numerous contributions to Morganton and Burke County, and

the company has "set the standard for corporate citizenship in this town, this region, and this state."

"Ben, to you, your family, and all the American Roller Bearing family of employees, thank you for this vote of confidence in our community," Cohen said. "I look forward to continuing to work with you to make Morganton an even better place for all of us to live work and play."

The total payroll for the new jobs is estimated to be between \$8 million and \$8.9 million. The overall annual wages will exceed the Burke County annual average wage which is \$30,784 and the annual average wage in Alexander County which is \$26,728.

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