



Fife and Drum Corps reenactors in downtown.

CITY PRIDE

MORGANTON, NC

November 2014 • Morganton's Citizen Newsletter



Be wary of scammers

Across North Carolina, residents are once again reporting that scammers are calling their homes and threatening to disconnect their utility service. The scammers demand immediate payment over the phone, and some scammers are even using the names of City employees when they call.

The City of Morganton does not call any electric or water customer by phone demanding payment by money order or pre-paid card. City of Morganton customers who may get behind on their payments will be notified via a City utility bill, and City staff will work with customers to set up payment arrangements if at all possible.

If you receive a call, do not listen to the scammer's instructions. Please hang up immediately and contact the City Electric Department at 828-438-5277 or the Water Department at 828-438-5276. Do not share any personal information with these scammers and do not return any phone calls. Several customers have lost hundreds of dollars in related scams.

See **SCAMS** on Page 2

Morganton launching Smart Grid Pilot for utilities

The City of Morganton is launching a Smart Grid Pilot to test and evaluate using smart meter technology with the City's electric and water utility systems. Smart meters allow a utility company to monitor and communicate with a meter from headquarters and better manage the system, respond to problems, and possibly prevent problems before they happen.

The City plans to install 114 smart devices consisting of 90 residential electric meters, three commercial electric meters, six residential water meters, five industrial water meters, five load control devices, and five thermostats. The City will also install the infrastructure required to integrate the smart meter data into the City's billing software. The Smart Grid Pilot project will cost \$28,000 for the software and smart modules that go into the meters.

Electric Department Director

Brooks Kirby said there could be tremendous benefits if the pilot is successful and the City implements smart meters city-wide.

"Smart meters and smart devices could help the City save money and help customers save money in many, many ways," Kirby said. "We'll be able to see issues when they happen and where they happen; we'll be able to see some issues before they happen; and we'll be able to respond to issues faster after they happen."

The smart meters will send information to City Hall every 15 minutes and notify City staff of any issues in the system in real time. For example, when a smart electric meter loses power, the City Electric Department will receive a notification from that meter.

"Our typical response and repair time is between 30 minutes and two hours depending on the problem," Kirby said. "But with smart

meters, we'll know which meters are out and where they're out before we start rolling trucks. That should definitely reduce our response time."

Smart meters could also help prevent some problems. Kirby said the smart grid software will alert City staff to unusual activity on the meters. If the voltage on an electric meter is fluctuating, City staff will be notified. If water usage increases more than normal, City staff will be notified.

Water Resources Director Brad Boris said that smart water meters could be a useful water loss prevention tool and help provide better customer service.

"The main benefit for us would be the ability to detect water leaks early on," Boris said. "As it stands now, someone could have a water leak that runs for an entire month before it is noticed, and not only have we wasted a

See **SMART METERS** on Page 2

City Hall water tank repainted

The water tank located at Morganton City Hall was repainted in September and October. The paint on the tank had been peeling off for some time, and after evaluating options and receiving quotes, the Morganton City Council gave the go ahead in August to repaint the tank. The tank was cleaned and painted, and the Morganton Trading Company logo was painted on two sides. The tank does not contain any water and is not part of the City's water system, but it is considered a landmark in the City and a significant part of the Garrou-Morganton Full-Fashioned Hosiery Mills, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1999.



Morganton City Council

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

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

www.ci.morganton.nc.us

Parks and Recreation Department trying out green cleaning product

The City of Morganton Parks and Recreation Department is trying out a new, green cleaning product in the City's park restrooms, and so far the results are good.

Parks and Recreation Department Director Gary Leonhardt said that he decided to switch to the green product because he thought it would be healthier for people who use the park restrooms and safer for the staff who clean the restrooms.

"We clean a lot of restrooms across the park system at least once a day and some we clean two to three times a day," Leonhardt said. "In the past, we've used strong chemicals like bleach to clean surfaces, and then people would come in to the restroom right after it was cleaned. After learning about this new product, and seeing how well it worked, it seemed like a healthier solution."

The new cleaning product is called H2Orange2 Concentrate 117 and it's made by Envirox. It's made of stabilized hydrogen and orange oil. It's biodegradable, made from renewable ingredients, non-asthmagenic, has a neutral pH, and leaves no residue build-up. H2Orange2 Concentrate 117 cleans by using hydrogen peroxide to break down organic soils, making them easy to remove without leaving behind residue. According to Envirox, H2Orange2 Concentrate 117 kills 99.99% of common bacteria and 99.9% of viruses specified viruses (Herpes Simplex Virus Type 2, Influenza A2/Japan, HBV and HIV-1).

Leonhardt said he and his cleaning staff have been very pleased with the results so far.

"The product is definitely getting the job done," Leonhardt said. "The restrooms seem to



be just as clean, and they smell more pleasant. So far, we're very happy."

Leonhardt said he plans to use the H2Orange2 Concentrate 117 for six months to a year, and then evaluate the results and the cost compared to using cleaners such as bleach. The Parks and Recreation Department maintains three recreation facilities, 10 public parks, and the Morganton Greenway System.

Smart Meters

From the front

lot of water, but that customer is going to have to pay a costly water bill.

"With a smart water meter, we'll be able to detect the leak early, which will save water, save money, and help mitigate property damage caused by an undetected water leak."

The City Council and staff have been discussing smart meter technology for about a year. City Manager Sally Sandy assembled a team of department directors to study and evaluate the concept before spending any funds.

The Smart Grid Pilot will

launch with mostly residential customers living on Rand Street to W. Fleming Drive, along W. Fleming to Burkemont Avenue, and along Burkemont to W. Union Street, and the smart grid monitoring will only apply to the pilot group. Kirby said this area was selected because of the diversity of electric meters, different types of residences, varying terrain, and proximity to City Hall.

Kirby said the City should have all the pilot smart meters installed by the first of December, and staff will evaluate the program for a couple months. Staff plans to report the results of the pilot to the City Council during the Council's annual workshop in February.

Scams

From the front

Public Safety Chief Ronnie Rector said that if residents receive a phone call from a scammer, they can report it to Public Safety via 828-437-1911.

"If someone shows up to your house in person asking to get into your home, don't be afraid to ask for ID and don't be afraid to call City Hall to confirm the person is who they say they are," Rector said. "If you have any suspicions, then call 911 immediately."

**Call 911
for emergencies**

Holiday Events in the City

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 N. Green St., 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! This year's theme is "Christmas Vacation".

Breakfast with Santa

**Saturday • Dec. 6 & Dec. 13
8:30 and 10:00 am**

The annual Breakfast with Santa is scheduled for Saturday, Dec. 6 and 13, at 8:30 am and 10:00 am. Come 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 anyone 13 and older, and \$6 for children 12 and under.