

City Calendar

<http://bit.ly/mgacal>

Monday, 1/4

City Council Meeting
6pm @ City Hall

Saturday, 1/9

Pop-Up Farmers Market
9am-1pm @ 111 N. Green St.

Monday, 1/18

Martin Luther King Jr. Day
City Hall Closed

Tuesday, 1/26

Human Relations Commission
5:30pm @ 645 1st St.

Monday, 2/1

City Council Meeting
6pm @ City Hall

Saturday 2/13

Pop-Up Farmers Market
9am-1pm @ 111 N. Green St.



Get Involved!

Openings are available on multiple City boards and commissions. If you are interested in serving, contact: [Kelly Russell at krussell@ci.morganton.nc.us](mailto:krussell@ci.morganton.nc.us) or 828-438-5228.

Renovations to Courthouse Square making headway

Renovations to the Historic Courthouse Square in Downtown Morganton are progressing quickly, and the project is beginning to take shape.

Contractors recently began constructing the walls of the amphitheater, bringing to life the first pieces of the new structure on the square. Citizens will also notice that contractors have begun laying a concrete retainer wall around the perimeter of the Courthouse Square. This will provide a sturdy structure to retain the dirt wall around the Courthouse Square, and the stone wall will then be reconstructed using the original stones.

"We know everything looks very different than we are used to on the Courthouse Square right now, but we are making serious headway on this project and look forward to its completion," said Department of Cultural and Creative Development Director Sharon Jablonski. "We are creating something truly special for our community with this project, and know our citizens will love it."

The Courthouse Square renovations



Contractors recently began constructing the walls of the amphitheatre, which will be the newest structure on the Courthouse Square. The project is expected to be completed later this year.

began in the summer of 2020, and are expected to be completed later this year.

You can stay up-to-date with all of the progress being made on the project by visiting this link: <https://bit.ly/CourthouseSquare>.

Martha's Park closed for upgrades to amenities

Martha's Park is currently closed for renovations and upgrades to its playground equipment, and will remain closed for several months.

The playground closed on Dec. 28, 2020.

Renovations are being made to improve the quality of the park's amenities prior to the onset of warmer months, when the park is traditionally used more.

Parks and Recreation

Director Rob Winkler said the renovations will include a new main playground structure, ADA compliant playground equipment, new rubber mulch and pour-and-play surfacing, and a greater variety of playground equipment for all ages.

The Morganton Service League contributed \$50,000 toward the cost of the renovations.

The renovations to the

park are expected to be completed by Spring 2021.

"We are very much looking forward to upgrading this park for our citizens and visitors," Winkler said. "Martha's Park was cutting edge when it was first built, and we are looking forward to improving it for the current generation and generations to come."

Tips to save on your utility bills

Winter is here, but your utility bill doesn't have to send a shiver down your spine. There are several simple tips you can follow that will help you save money during the colder months. Check out some tips from ElectriCities of North Carolina below that will help you beat the winter blues and warm up to savings:

- 68 is the magic number. Set your thermostat to 68 degrees or lower when heating your home. Every degree above 68 can increase your bill by 3-5 percent.

- Set it and forget it. Take advantage of programmable thermostats. Especially if you have a furnace, set your thermostat to automatically turn the heat down at night and when you're away.

- Small isn't always mighty. Despite what you might think, space heaters use a lot of energy and can increase your monthly bill. If you have energy efficient central heating in your home, use that instead.

- Don't forget your maintenance. There are three things to remember regularly. When your fireplace is not in use, make sure your damper is closed; check or replace filters once a month; and clean air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators, and be sure they aren't blocked.

- Sunlight helps to heat your home for free. Open drapes and let the sun stream in to help keep your home warm.

Prepare your pipes for winter

Colder temperatures are here to stay for a few months. It is a good idea to winterize the pipe system of your home to make sure your water pipes do not burst during cold weather.

The City of Morganton Water Resources Department would like to remind its customers to conduct a thorough check of their homes to protect water lines and guard against the possible inconvenience of loss of service due to frozen lines. As always, if a customer has a water problem, they can call the City of Morganton Water Resources at 828-438-5276 and City staff will work to resolve the issue.

Below you can find a checklist of things to do to winterize your pipe system.

Wrap exposed pipes: Cover any exposed pipes with insulating material. If you do not have commercial insulating material use plastic, newspaper, rags or blankets.

Block air passages into crawl spaces: Check crawl spaces to be sure pipes are protected. Use cardboard or rags to block air passages.

Secure basements against the cold: Plug up drafty cracks and repair broken window panes.

Check outside faucets: Remove hoses from outside faucets and check the washers to be sure there are no leaks which

could freeze and back up into the household plumbing.

Locate your shut-off valve: Make sure every member of the household knows where your main water shutoff valve is located. The shutoff valve should be used in the event of a burst pipe or if you have a significant leak. If you do not have a main shutoff valve, you should install one for your protection.

Keep meter box lids closed: Do not open your meter box, as injuries can result from lids which are not properly secured. Also, cold air can freeze the meter. If you notice a meter box lid which is not properly secured, please call the City immediately.

Make sure heat reaches your pipes: If your pipes are enclosed in a cabinet under the bathroom or kitchen sink, leave the doors open so heat can get in.

Keep a trickle of water running: During periods of low usage and particularly on below-freezing nights, keep a trickle of water running from the faucet highest in the home. This trickle should be a steady stream the size of the lead in a pencil.

If You Have A Frozen Pipe: If you do not know the location of the problem, call the City of Morganton Water Resources Department at 828-438-5276. We will

check to see if you have water available at the meter. If the water is frozen at the water meter, we will correct the problem. If not, the problem is in your household plumbing and it is your responsibility to correct it.

Wait for the pipes to thaw: If you have some running water, the safest and cheapest thing to do is wait for the frozen pipes to thaw.

Never use an open flame: Never try to thaw a pipe with a flame, because you may start a fire.

Call a plumber: If all else fails, call a plumber and get professional assistance.

These suggestions will help you prevent freezing pipe damage:

Pipes in attics and crawl spaces should be protected with insulation or heat. Pipe insulation is available in fiberglass or foam sleeves.

Heating cables and tapes are effective in freeze protection. Select a heating cable with the UL label and a built-in thermostat that turns the heat on when needed (without a thermostat, the cable has to be plugged in each time and might be forgotten). Follow the manufacturer's instructions closely.

If you have any questions about these tips, call Water Resources at 828-438-5276.

MORGANTON CITY COUNCIL

Ronnie Thompson • Mayor
Butch McSwain • District 1
Chris Jernigan • District 2
Chris Hawkins • District 3
Wendy Cato - Mayor Pro Tem • District 4

CONTACT THE COUNCIL

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Morganton Matters is produced by the City's Public Information Office.

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