

## City Calendar

<http://bit.ly/mgacal>

**Thursday, 3/11**

**ACC Drive-Thru Chili Fundraiser**

11am @ Community House

**Saturday, 3/13**

**Pop-Up Farmers Market**

9am-1pm @ 111 N. Green St.

**Friday, 4/2**

**Good Friday**

City Hall Closed

**Monday, 4/5**

**City Council Meeting**

6pm @ City Hall

**Thursday, 4/8**

**Planning & Zoning Commission**

5:15pm @ City Hall

**Monday, 4/12**

**Board of Adjustment**

5:15pm @ City Hall



## Get Involved!

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

## City wins three Public Power Awards of Excellence

ElectriCities of North Carolina announced this week that the City of Morganton won three 2020 Public Power Awards of Excellence. The City of Morganton earned awards for Wholesale Power Cost, Workforce Development, and the Value of Public Power. Morganton was one of 16 communities in North Carolina to be recognized for its excellence in public power.

"It's exciting to see the many achievements in North Carolina public power communities each year," said ElectriCities CEO Roy Jones. "I am always impressed by the ingenuity and true commitment of public power communities, particularly throughout 2020 when cities and towns were faced with challenges no one could have anticipated. We are proud of these public power communities and are grateful for their dedication."

Morganton earned the Value of Public Power Award for its efforts in effectively communicating the value of power system ownership to its stakeholders and citizens. ElectriCities recognized the City for its communication efforts on social media about power outages to keep citizens updated during storms, weather events, or prolonged outages. The City makes efforts to keep customers updated about outages in real-time, including posting updates and replying to citizen concerns at all hours of the day and night.

ElectriCities also recognized the City for communicating the value of public power through its Public Power Week video series created and produced by City of Morganton Public Information Officer Ethan Smith and Production Specialist Chad Medford.

ElectriCities awarded Morganton the Wholesale Power Cost Award for its energy reduction efforts, load management practices, and innovative rate structure for industrial customers. These

practices all combine to ensure low rates for our customers, and make Morganton a competitive and reliable power provider. The City was recognized with this award for adding an industrial rate in 2020 that better captures the actual kilowattage used by local industrial customers.

The Workforce Development Award was given to Morganton for its efforts in recruiting and retaining linemen in its Electric Services Department.

After significant turnover and difficulty recruiting skilled line techs in 2018 and 2019, the City of Morganton partnered with ElectriCities to begin offering career development training for Line Technicians in January 2020. It was the City's hope that by offering a clear path for career development, this would encourage staff to stay on and train to gain more skills in their field, which would lead to promotions.

The City's career development training has provided entry-level linemen with access to high-quality training provided by ElectriCities, and gives them a clear path to promotion based on gaining knowledge and skills in their field. As a result, the City reduced its turnover rate for its linemen positions to zero percent by the end of 2020.

"We are very pleased that the men and women of our Electric Services Department continue to be recognized for their hard work in serving our public power customers," said City Manager Sally Sandy. "These awards are a testament to the excellent work our employees do, and the innovative approach Morganton takes in being a public power provider."



PROUD TO BE A  
**2020 PUBLIC POWER  
AWARD OF EXCELLENCE**

# WINNER

## Construction underway on new section of Greenway

Contractors are making progress on a new section of greenway that will connect Downtown Morganton to the existing Catawba River Greenway at Catawba Meadows Park. This new addition will be one mile, and will create a new paved path between North Green Street and Alphabet Lane. This path will then continue along Alphabet Lane and Sanford Drive, before crossing Sanford Drive and connecting to Catawba Meadows Park.

The project is expected to be completed in January of 2022. Tri-County Paving, Inc., of West Jefferson, was awarded the contract to construct the new section of greenway during the December 2020 Morganton City Council Meeting. City staff will aid in the completion of the project by providing design services.

"This new section of greenway provides access to our greenway system in an area that previously has not had it," said Parks and Recreation Director Rob Winkler. "It creates more connectivity between various parts of our City, and gives our citizens more outdoor recreational opportunities. We recently completed the renovation of Martin Luther King Jr. Park in the same area, and we are very glad to be able to continue to invest more dollars, resources and efforts in providing our community with more outdoor amenities where they are needed most."

## City creates Cultural Arts Commission

The arts have long been an integral part of Morganton's community, and now they will be a core part of the City's mission in driving economic development and creating a sense of place in our City.

During its February meeting, the Morganton City Council authorized the creation of the Cultural Arts Commission. The blueprint for the creation of this group was laid out in the 2018 Downtown Morganton Master Plan as a necessary element of driving downtown revitalization, instilling a sense of place and pride, and generating economic development in Morganton.

Department of Cultural and Creative Development

Director Sharon Jablonski said this new commission will partner with organizations such as the Burke Arts Council, the Morganton Public Library, the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics Morganton Campus, and Western Piedmont Community College in order to identify spots throughout the City for art installations that will connect various cultural hubs of the City. Making arts a central focus of Morganton's development and culture will drive economic prosperity and diversify opportunities for Morganton to grow.

The City Council approved 15 members to serve on the Cultural Arts Commission. Alison Dula, Khamkas

Inthavong, Kristin Steiner and Hamilton Williams will serve three year terms. Lorinnsa Bridges-Kee, Leanna Brittain, Darren Lathan, Courtney Long and Nancy VanNoppen will serve two year terms. Scott Coley, Meghan Liedkie, Pascuala Pedro, Deborah Jones and Daniela Gomez will serve one year terms.

The members of the Cultural Arts Commission were selected because they represent a broad cross-section of Morganton's community and arts culture. The group has already organized a poetry contest in conjunction with Adventure Bounds Books, which you can read more about here: <http://bit.ly/ABBPoetryContest>.

## Soccer Complex expansion complete

The Morganton Parks and Recreation Department recently completed an expansion of the Catawba River Soccer Complex that will provide citizens and visitors enhanced recreational and sporting opportunities in Morganton for years to come.

This most recent expansion of the soccer complex added two new multi-use fields, a dog park, a section of paved greenway, a picnic shelter, and a new playground on the property. The playground, dog park, greenway, and shelter

are already open, and the multi-use fields will be ready for play in the fall. This \$1.4 million dollar expansion was made possible with funds from a North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant, along with City funding and private donations from local companies and citizens.

The Catawba River Soccer Complex was originally constructed in 2000, and housed only two fields at the time. Since then, through the execution of planned expansion phases, the complex is now home to

six regulation-size fields, a Petanque court, and all the aforementioned amenities added in the most recent phase of expansion.

Through the planning and execution of these continued expansions, the Catawba River Soccer Complex has become a standout facility for large tournaments and high school games throughout the region. This most recent expansion will ensure the Catawba River Soccer Complex continues to retain its appeal as a premier soccer and recreational facility in North Carolina.

### 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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