

# Meeting your customers where they are

**Communicating in today's environment** 

Karen Duncan & Ethan Smith City of Morganton



## Who are we?

### Karen Duncan

Finance Director, City of Morganton

• Maintains the fiscal integrity of the City of Morganton as well as administers, directs and manages its financial operation

### **Ethan Smith**

Public Information Officer, City of Morganton

• Oversees public and press relations, website maintenance, social media communications and more

# Where does good **communication begin?**

Effective communication begins with your utility bill

Needs to be easy to read and digest

Design should be simple, straightforward and consumerfriendly



#### Summary of Charges

Previous Balance

To receive future

bills electronically. visit https://morganton.estmt.net

Your registration ID:

	Electric Service
	Area Light
	Renewable Energy
\$6.05	NC Electric Sales Tax
\$11.60	Water Service
\$3.34	Water Debt Recovery
	Sewer Service
	Sewer Debt Recovery
\$10.00	Solid Waste Trash Pickup
\$?.?	Simply Green Recycling
\$262.03	Current Actual Charges
	Total Account Balance
\$358.00	Budget Billing Plan Payment
\$358.00	Total Due

Visit www.morgantonnc.gov/payonline to pay this bill online!

Service

Electric

Water (

F19708334

W16885252

CHARGES THIS MONTH	BUDGET BIL	LING PL		ACCOUNT BALANCE 180.23)
Amount Due: \$358.00			ue Date / <mark>7/2(</mark>	
Bill Type: Regular	Account Ty Residential	Bud	nent Typ Iget/Bank	Draft
123 Good Morganto	l Street on, NC 28655			
Morganto	l Street on, NC 28655	pe Payı	nent Typ	e

UTILITY SERVICE STATEMENT

CITY OF MORGANTON PO Box 3448, Morganton, NC 28680-3448 (828) 437-8863 | www.morgantonnc.go

Please detach lower portion and remit with your payment

Current

05/16/2014 04/16/2014

05/16/2014 04/16/2014

\$1 103 10



10

Account Number	00015361-00
Due Date	7/7/2014
Amount Due	\$358.00
After Due Date Pay	\$393.80
Amount Enclosed	
Service Address:	
123 Good Street	

# Why is good bill design important?

Your bill is the only point of contact with your City for the majority of customers

A bad bill design results in more customer calls, complaints and confusion



# How did we do it?

Several different elements aligned at the right time that prompted overhauling our bill design

At the same time we created a new bill, we also gave our customers the option to pay online with the help of ElectriCities

NCMPA1 P.O. Box 29513	POWEL DIULIO			
PARTICIPANT BILLING	DATE DUE DATE	FOR SERVICE	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE	
MORGANTON 07/10/	15 07/20/15	06/01/15 TO 06/30/15	\$3,008,364.39	
Vholesale Power Service Sch DESCRIPTION	edule RS-30 RATE	QTY	AMOUNT	
Demand Charges: First Demand Block Second Demand Block Annual Demand Charge	\$ 51.00/kW \$ 12.75/kW \$ 1.02/kW	23,079 33,013 52,556	1,177,029.00 420,915.75 53,607.12	
R-11 Avoid Cost Mo. C Energy Charges: First Energy Block Second Energy Block Rider 11 Avoid Cost Energy Credit	ap. CR \$ -11.83/kW \$0.048800/kWh \$0.031800/kWh \$-0.153000/kWh	2,534 18,289,137 15,184,024 25,336	(29,977.22) 892,509.89 482,851.96 (3,876.41)	
Rider 10 Surplus Energy	Credit		(6,390.00)	
	redit for Renewable Ener	gy Generation	(2,962.24)	
dditional Charges DESCRIPTION	RATE	QTY	AMOUNT	
Rider 3 Delivery Charge	\$0.018/kW	56,092	1,009.66	
Rider 4 Distribution Ch MORGANTON #1 MORGANTON #3	\$0.25/kW \$0.36/kW	16,298 14,159	4,074.50 5,097.24	
Rider 15 Renewable Ener Standard (REPS) Charg	gy Portfolio e		8,900.52	

North Carolina Municipal Power Agency Number

Please remit to

S

ecial Obligation Charges		AMOUNT
SEPA Transmission Charge Demand Side Management Credit Power Agency Generator Credit Load Management Generation Credit Other Charges/(Credits)		7,842.69 (1,200.00) (809.03) 0.00 (259.04)
	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE	\$3,008,364.39

If you have any questions concerning this bill, call Susan Benton at 1-800-768-7697, ext. 6107

About ten years ago Morganton recognized that its current utility billing system was no longer meeting its current needs and it was time to begin seeking another solution - one that could provide consumers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century what they expect from their utility provider.



After a lengthy process, the decision was made to partner with ElectriCities, as a hosted client, utilizing the Harris NorthStar solution

New software...

New ideas...

More options...



Objective:

Fully integrated payment portal with access to invoices generated by three different billing systems

Solution:

ElectriCities designed and hosted payment portal Payment processing utilizing Point and Pay



Objective:

Provide ebilling option with email information gathered/stored by third party

Solution:

Southdata



Objective:

Outsource bill printing and mailing

Solution:

Southdata



Objective:

Redesign utility bill

Considerations:

What information is most important to the customer

How do we present the information in a way that it is easy to understand



Asked Customer Service Representatives what questions customers most often ask or complain about and used those comments to select the top 3 items we would change/emphasize in the new bill design.

- 1. Need to have the service being billed be easily identified
- 2. Need to have the amount due in bold print
- 3. Need to have the due date also be bold print

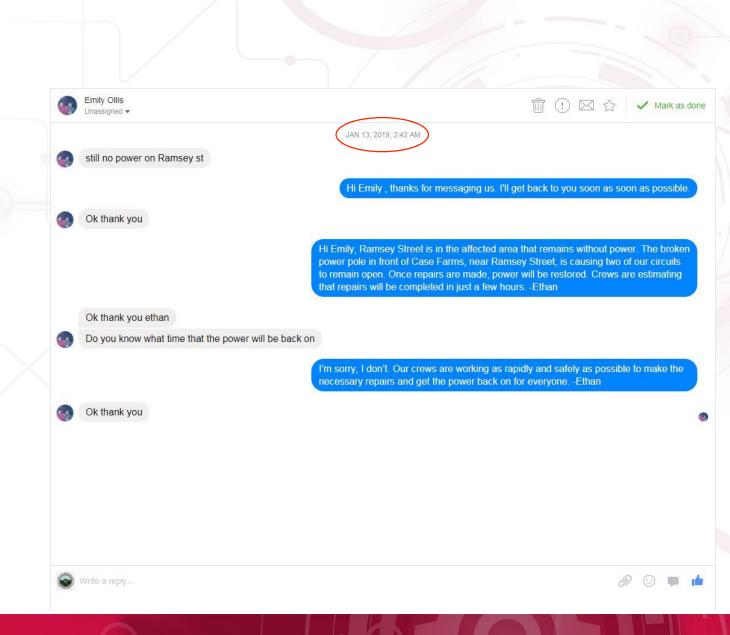
## **Morganton's Utility Bill**

Public Information Officer redesigned bill and customers responded favorably to the change.



# Meet your customers where they are

- What does this mean?
  - Find what works for your customers, and utilize it
  - Everyone is different



# Meet your customers where they are

- Multi-pronged approach
- City website, press contacts, social media
- Always be willing to work until you have a resolution





#### 2019 State of the City, I



Mayor Ronnie Thompson sat down for a chat in the council chambers about the State of the City.

#### CITY CALENDAR Calendar & Events Today C Tuesday, January 29 V Tuesday, January 29 V 7:00pm Trivia at Catawba #twitter Monday, February 4

Council Meeting

6:00pm

#### LATEST NEWS

#### Go to the Newsroon

Wreck causing power outage City crews are working to restore power for approximately 650...

#### N THE SPOTLIGHT

#### Morganton Skate Park

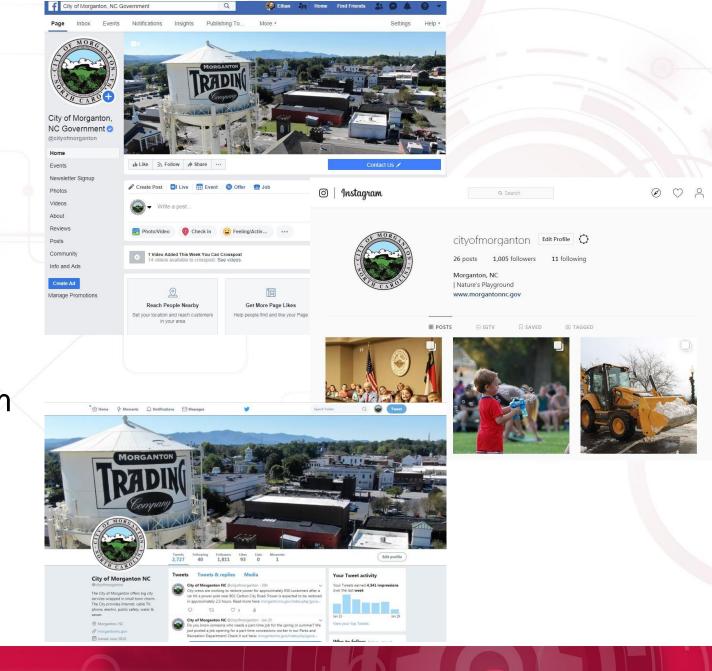
The City of Morganton skate park is open. Work on landscaping. sidewalks, signs, and...



NCSSM Western Campus

# Meet your customers where they are

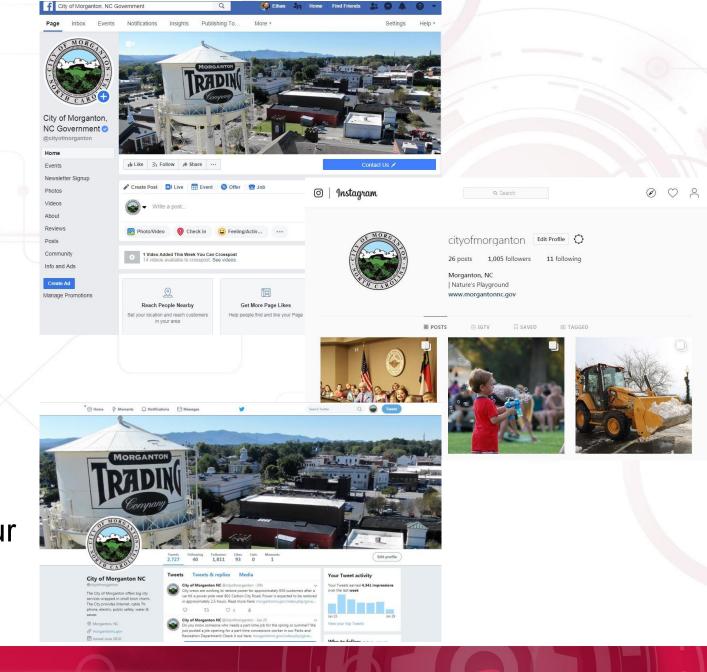
- We are on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
- Captures the majority of customers across diverse demographics



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# Meet your customers where they are

- Diversify your content
- Be consistent
- Each social channel has a different function
- Build trust between you and your customers



# Utilizing social media for your benefit

The more you can get information out ahead of time, the better

Make sure your customers know what's happening

This makes it easier on employees doing the work in the field

Show AND tell



City of Morganton, NC Government Published by Ethan Smith [?] - January 16 at 4:13 PM - 🔇

Update 4:38 pm: The trees have been successfully removed from the power lines without any outages.

Tree removal work currently being performed in the 700 block of West Union Street may cause power outages for some City customers this afternoon. Crews are working to remove trees from power lines in the area, and may need to turn off power for some customers in order to safely remove the trees. The work is mostly complete and no outages have been reported so far. Read more about which areas of the City may be affected here: https://www.morgantonnc.gov/.../3098-tree-removal-may-cause-p...



MORGANTONNC.GOV

Tree removal may cause power outages

The official website of the City of Morganton, NC. Come experience Natur...

1,847 People Reached	95 Engagements	Во	oost Post
Deanna Clarke Wi	se, Judy Lane Davis and 8 others	2 Comment	s 4 Shares
凸 Like	Comment	⇔ Share	<b>⊚</b> -

# Utilizing social media for your benefit

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Show AND tell



Like This Page - 18 hrs . Update 4:35 p.m.: Power has been restored to all affected customers, except those in the area of Glendale Street. Our linemen are hard at work replacing this power pole that was hit so we can get the power back on for customers. The outage is affecting approximately 650 customers in the Carbon City Road area, and power is expected to be restored in approximately 2.5 hours. Read more here: https:// www.morgantonnc.gov/index.php/government/city-manager/public-information-office/news-releases/ 3107-wreck-causing-power-outage ( ■: John Stitt) Tag Photo Add Location Edit

Engagements

Comment

People Reached

0 2 0 53

Boost Post

10 Comments 19 Share

City of Morganton, NC Government

Published by Ethan Smith [?]

# Utilizing social media for your benefit

Show AND tell

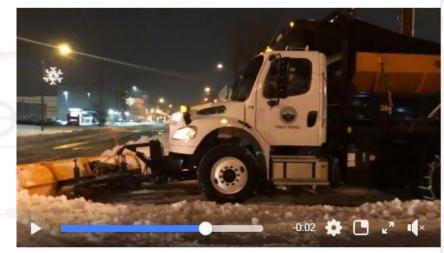
Get your message out while being as concise as possible

Establish reasonable expectations



City of Morganton, NC Government Published by Ethan Smith [?] - December 9, 2018 - 🔇

City crews are working as rapidly and safely as possible to clear roads throughout the City. Road conditions remain hazardous, and Morganton Public Safety officers advise that people should not be on the road unless traveling is absolutely necessary.



8,319 People	Reached	1,949 Engageme	ents	В	oost Post
00	167		27 Comments	65 Shares	5.9K Views
	🖒 Like	Comment	Ŵ	Share	<b>⊛</b> -
Most Re	elevant 👻				
0	Write a comme	nt		0	@ 😯
	Ruth Morrell R town needs you	tevilla Thank you, City ⊮ 🥶 🤎	of Morganton!	East Unior	n in
	Like · Reply · Me	ssage · 7w			
	4 Replies				

# **Social media pitfalls**

Beware of trolls

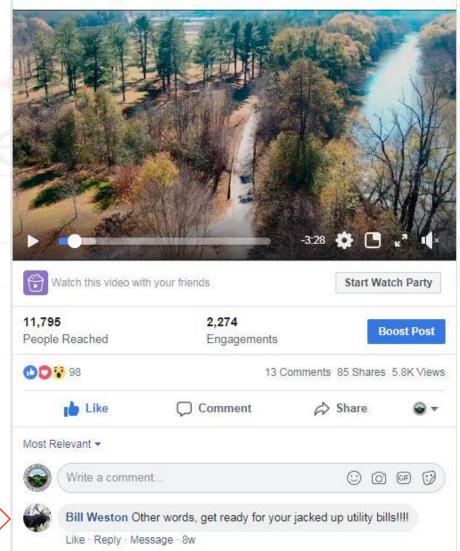
You can't please everybody

Have a strategy Who responds? And when? What do you respond to?



City of Morganton, NC Government Published by Ethan Smith [?] - November 29, 2018 - S

Winter is coming - but before it gets here, take a look at some Fall views from around Morganton.



### ACCONNECTIONS SUMMIT

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## **Our social media policy**

Don't feed the trolls

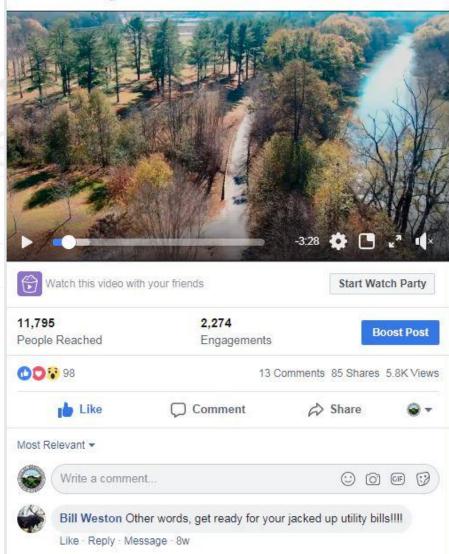
Have conversations through direct messages

Team of people established to respond to messages and make posts



City of Morganton, NC Government Published by Ethan Smith [?] - November 29, 2018 - S

Winter is coming - but before it gets here, take a look at some Fall views from around Morganton.



# Other strategies to reach customers

The press can be your friend

Make your websites and social media channels the "go-to" points of contact for your customers

Always follow-up when necessary



#### City of Morganton, NC Government Published by Ethan Smith [?] - December 3, 2018 - 🔇

City employees responded to the perfect storm over Thanksgiving weekend, as precipitation and below-freezing temperatures caused widespread power outages and other issues throughout the City. Morganton City Manager Sally Sandy wrote a Guest Editorial detailing the response of City staff during the storm, which appeared in this Sunday's edition of the Morganton News-Herald. Read the Guest Editorial here: https://www.morgantonnc.gov/ .../3061-city-employees-respond-t...



#### MORGANTONNC.GOV

City employees respond to perfect storm

The official website of the City of Morganton, NC. Come experience Natur...

1,815 People Reached	201 Engagements	В	oost Post
00 Jon Mercer, Bonni	e Kellogg and 22 others	4 Commen	ts 2 Shares
لية Like	Comment	Share	<b>⊗</b> <del>+</del>

# **Our flow of information**

Information comes to the PIO PIO discerns how to best get the information out Posts information to City website Publishes on social media Sends to the media

This is how we "connect citizens to City Hall"



## Make sure your customers know where to go

- Direct customers to the right point of contact as quickly as possible
- Help quickly, be friendly
- Building rapport builds trust









The energy behind public power

www.electricities.com

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facebook.com/Electricities



@ElectriCitiesNC