

# Chamber Connection

Volume 4, No. 12 • December, 2017 • [www.kilgorechamber.com](http://www.kilgorechamber.com)

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Representatives from 14 non-profit groups meet with the E<sup>4</sup> class.

## E<sup>4</sup> Leadership class learns about 'serving your community'

The E<sup>4</sup> Leadership class completed their second session in November. To start the day, the class joined up with Helping Hands volunteers during the morning to help at the food pantry.

On the next leg of their journey, the class participated in a SPEED NETWORKING program along with 14 non-profit organizations. Each class member visited with representatives from the 14 organizations and became aware how each organization benefit our residents, children and the community as a whole. The participating non-profits included: Kilgore Historical Preservation Foundation, Kilgore Improvement Beautification Association, SAFFE Day, Ambugs, United Fund, Habitat for Humanity, Boys & Girls Club, Relay for Life, Shakespeare Guild, Rotary Club, Junior Achievement, East Texas Treatment Center, East



Texas CASA and Helping Hands.

During the afternoon, Gene Keenon, Citizen of the Year 2016 (annual award presented by the Kilgore Chamber of Commerce) shared a message on "How Serving Your Community Makes A Difference."

And to put a spin on development of leadership skills, Danette Heffner, EVP/HR Director, Citizens National Bank spoke on personnel management and personality types.

The class finalized their full day of activities with organizing their class project. The class should be ready to announce their community project after the first of the year. The next E<sup>4</sup> Leadership session, Preparing Students for the Future, was scheduled for December 12. Both KISD and Kilgore College have a key role in preparing the education session.

*See more photos, page 2*

## 87th Annual Christmas Parade

The Kilgore Christmas Parade was one of the best with 95 entries portraying different "Stories of Christmas." We saw the Grinch many times throughout the parade.

Thanks to everyone for making the parade the best of the best!



Photo by Luis Guzman

**Best Overall Float, ArpcO Valves & Control**

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**MANY THANKS TO OUR TEAM OF  
PARADE VOLUNTEERS**

Angela Burch, Kilgore Police Department  
Kilgore Police Department  
City of Kilgore Staff

**Chamber Volunteers:**

James Murphy, Republic Services  
Reece Nichols, Edward Jones  
Melissa Azzam, Melissa Azzam Insurance - Allstate  
Brent Rice, Brent Rice - State Farm  
Debbie McDaniel, WrapMaster, Inc.  
Linda Ballard, Kilgore News Herald  
Chip Hale, Overton Films  
Desirae Sanchez, Republic Services  
Janice Connor, Texas Museum of Broadcasting

**SEE PARADE WINNERS, PAGE 8**



**E<sup>4</sup> Leadership class members work at the Helping Hands food pantry. Right, Gene Keenon shares a message on “How Serving Your Community Makes a Difference.” E<sup>4</sup> Leadership completed its second session in November.**




## RURAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

LOAN OPPORTUNITY

USDA Rural Development has partnered with the East Texas Regional Development Company (ETRDC) to offer its Intermediary Relending Program. This program provides low-interest loans to businesses and community development projects in rural communities.

### Who May Apply?

Loan recipients may be individuals, public or private organizations, or other legal entities given that:

- Majority ownership is held by US citizens or permanent residents.
- The applicant owes no delinquent debt to the Federal Government.
- The applicant is unable to obtain affordable commercial financing for the project elsewhere.
- Are located in an eligible rural area.
- The applicant has no legal or financial interest with the lending partner, ETRDC.

### What is an eligible area?

- Rural areas outside a city or town with a population of less than 50,000
- Urbanized areas near a city of 50,000+ may not be eligible
- The borrower's headquarters may be based within a larger city so long as the project service area is located in an eligible rural area

### What is the maximum loan available?

- \$150,000
- 75% of the total cost of the recipient's project for which the loan is being made, whichever is less.

### How may funds be used?

- The acquisition, construction, conversion, enlargement or repair of a business or business facility, particularly when jobs will be created or retained
- The purchase or development of land (easements, rights of way, buildings, facilities, leases, materials)
- The purchase of equipment, leasehold improvements, machinery, or supplies
- Start-up costs and working capital
- Pollution control and abatement
- Transportation services
- Feasibility studies and some fees
- Hotels, motels, convention centers
- Education institutions
- Aquaculture-based rural small business

### Why do USDA Rural Development and the ETRDC do this?

The purpose of the program is to alleviate poverty and increase economic activity and employment in rural communities. Under the program, loans are provided to local organizations for the establishment of revolving loan funds. These revolving loan funds are used to help finance business and economic development activity to create or retain jobs in disadvantaged and remote communities.

# Partnership at Work

The Kilgore Chamber of Commerce joined hands with Kilgore Economic Development Corporation to establish a coalition to support a permanent home for the Small Business Development Center through UT Tyler's Longview University Center and managed by its School of Business. Amanda Nobles, KEDC Executive Director and Chair of the newly-established coalition, presented opening remarks at a press conference on December 7 followed by remarks by Gregg County Judge Bill Stoudt and Harrison County Judge Hugh Taylor.

The coalition members have joined together to show support for the Small Business Development Center through a collaboration of all communities located in the six-county region served by the SBDC. The coalition represents counties, cities, economic development organizations and chambers of commerce, working to retain SBDC services where they've historically

been offered to fuel entrepreneurship in Gregg County, Harrison County, Panola County, Rusk County, Upshur County and Marion County.

Steps must still be taken by the coalition including a meeting with the main SBDC within the next few weeks. After the first of the year, submissions for SBDC bids will be taken and a home will be decided upon for the SBDC.

“A Small Business Development Center is critical to economic development,” Nobles added, “offering training and advice for entrepreneurs, helping them build a solid foundation that ensures long-term contributions to their home city, county and the region as a whole. It is our hope for UT Tyler to shoulder our long-term needs.”

“It's important to our coalition and, in particular, to our small businesses that these six counties can be identified as a closely-defined SBDC district,” Nobles said.



**Judge Bill Stoudt**  
Gregg County



**Amanda Nobles**  
Executive Director, KEDC



3800 Stone Road  
Kilgore, TX 75662

chuck.vanderbilt@etcog.org  
www.etrdc.com

903-218-6411

# Talking Tourism

Make your list and check it twice because it's finally Christmas time in Kilgore! Every year, Christmas Under The Stars starts in November and continues through December with a multitude of events.

For Kilgore tourism, not all these events were revolved around the holidays. Kilgore also hosted Reel East Texas Film Festival. This was the inaugural year and it received a 5 Star rating. The East Texas Oil Museum has a new exhibit named "Apron Strings... Ties to the Past." This exhibit features kitchen aprons for every decade starting with the 1930s.

In exciting culinary news, 2017 has brought Kilgore new dining options such as The Catch in downtown Kilgore, as well as Panda Express and Schlotszkys, along with The Pump House at the Meadowbrook Golf & Event Center. Though many of the exciting events have taken place, there are still a few upcoming events to put on your calendar.



**Ryan Polk**  
Tourism Mgr.



November was a historic month for Kilgore. The Reel East Texas Film Festival (RETFF) was held for the first time at the historic U.S. Post Office and Texan Theater in downtown Kilgore. The Texan Theater and U.S. Post Office were all fixed up and provided the perfect cultured setting for this new event. Filmmakers and visitors from around Texas and beyond came to Kilgore for the first time. Local film producer and founder of RETFF, Chip Hale has developed an annual event that will continue to benefit Kilgore and East Texas. In fact, the festival was most recently ranked as one of the top 100 best reviewed film festivals according to Film Freeway. Film submissions have already begun for RETFF 2018.

Visit Kilgore was thrilled to host a Filmmakers brunch and guided tour during RETFF. The East Texas Oil Museum provided a storied setting for the brunch as many filmmakers toured the museum to better understand the history of Kilgore and East Texas. The filmmakers' tour was a mixed bag of both cultural institutions, outdoors settings, historic buildings and vacant industrial buildings. Thanks to fellow tour guides Mayor Ronnie Spr-

mlin and Bill Woodall who helped create the ultimate Kilgore experience. There were a lot of great inquiries about the sites seen and stories heard. We can't wait for RETFF 2018!



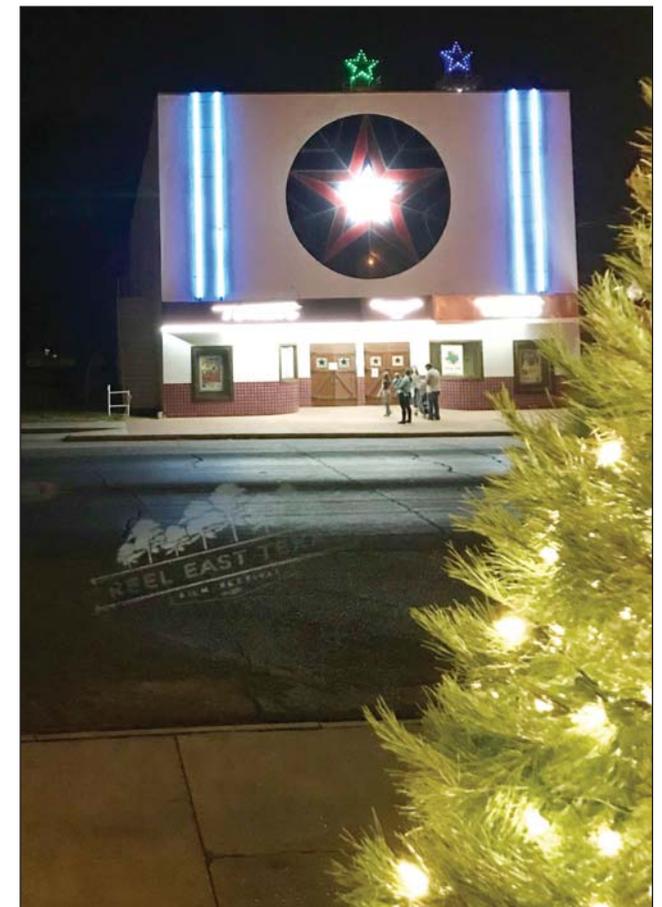
In other exciting news, Kilgore was featured in the December issue of Texas Farm and Home magazine. The front cover features the East Texas Oil Museum shining bright for the holidays. We have copies at the Kilgore Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau office so feel free to come by and pick one up!

Historic Downtown Kilgore has been, and still is bustling with holiday events. "Jingle All The Way," a favorite Kilgore Main Street event for many during the holiday season, will be on Saturday Dec. 16th and will include a Noah's Ark Petting zoo, children activities, holiday characters, and of course, shopping and food. "Stuff The Stocking," happening the Saturday before Christmas, gives last minute shoppers the opportunity to finish their shopping lists among the many retailers in historic Downtown Kilgore. What better way to escape the crowds at

the malls? The downtown merchants and restaurants are decorated and are offering extended shopping hours through the holiday season. Times and locations vary, through December 24.

Along with Jingle All The Way event, Reel East Texas Film Festival is hosting a Classic Christmas Movie Marathon in the Texan Theater Saturday, Dec. 16, with different movies starting at various times. I here that White Christmas and Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street are in the lineup. Bring a blanket and dress for winter as the movies will be playing from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

In lieu of free admission, Reel Texas Film Festival will be accepting donations as they work with the City of Kilgore and other organizations to help revitalize the historic theaters in downtown Kilgore. For more information and movie times go to the Reel East Texas Film Festival Facebook page.



We love all of the holiday pictures that we are seeing on Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. Please use the hashtag #KilgoreChristmas so we can see all the Christmas photos over the Holidays – and possibly repost some on our Visit Kilgore social media sites. For more information on happenings and events in Kilgore, visit our website [www.visitkilgore.com](http://www.visitkilgore.com), and stay up-to-date on current events by liking us on Facebook and following us on Instagram and Twitter at VisitKilgore.

# Ribbon Cutting & Ground Breaking



The Kilgore Chamber Ambassadors, Board Members and staff celebrated the grand opening of Kilgore Tire Center's second location at 4310 Highway 42N. Kilgore Tire Center's new location, opened their doors on November 27 and offers services for commercial vehicles, large and medium trucks. For more information, call 903-984-3536 or log on to [kilgoretirecenter.com](http://kilgoretirecenter.com)



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# WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

The Kilgore Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau staff, board and members just completed the busiest couple of months of the 2017 year that were action-packed with Chamber member events and community events.



Morning Brew, one of the Chamber's business connection events, was sponsored by and held at Arpc Valve & Controls in November. Thank you to Bobbie Guinn and Gary Turner, co-owners, and their staff for hosting the Brew. Arpc Valves & Controls is a leader in the oil and gas surface safety systems industry. Arpc Valves & Controls, LLC is located at 120 Marvin A Smith Rd. If you need their service, contact them at 903-8374-7007 or go to [www.arpcovalves.com](http://www.arpcovalves.com).

"It is always a fun time to come together with our Chamber members during Brew! Making new business contacts can benefit your business. Join us on December 14 at DeGraffenried Dentistry and see how it can benefit you and your business. If you can't join us, send your employee(s)," said Cindy Morris, Chamber President.



Making business connections is one of the top benefits for our Chamber Investors! We enjoyed hosting the quarterly BizConnect on December 5. A special thank you to Ursula Plaisance, Director of Helping Hands, for bringing a special message of Christmas need for the food pantry this season. And many thanks to Matthew & Meaghan Simpson and other members of the Texas Shakespeare Festival for joining us with Christmas entertainment for their "It's A Wonderful Life" Live Radio Show.



Visit Kilgore, the tourism department of the Kilgore Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau, partnered with the Reel East Texas Film Festival for their inaugural festival year. Visit Kilgore hosted a welcome brunch for film producers on Saturday, November 18 followed by a location tour to entice them to return to Kilgore for filming and production. The tour group visited many locations, including Texas Broadcast Museum.



The Kilgore Chamber staff also helped in planning and coordinating the vendors for A Very Derrick Christmas on November 16. We had a great time working with KHPF to host an outstanding event, kicking off the Christmas season!



## Welcome New Members!

Welcome to our newest Chamber Member Investor! Please join us in welcoming them by patronizing their business for your personal and professional needs.



**OPENING SOON!!**

403 N. Kilgore Street  
903-204-6069

Facebook: RawIronKilgore



107 N. Kilgore Street  
903-218-0738

Facebook: TheCatchKilgore



WEST ALLEN BRYSON, PC

West Allen Bryson, PC  
211 N. Center Street, Longview  
903-212-9300  
www.westallenlaw.com

Interested in finding out how the Chamber works for business? We welcome the opportunity to visit with you and share the many reasons your company would benefit as a member investor. Contact us at 903-984-5022, email us at [info@kilgorechamber.com](mailto:info@kilgorechamber.com), or check out member investor information at [www.KilgoreChamber.com](http://www.KilgoreChamber.com).



## Member Investor RENEWALS

Thank you to our member investors for their continual belief and support of the important work of the Kilgore Chamber of Commerce. We recognize and thank each member for their investment commitment made November 1 - December 6.

Avalon Faire  
Big K Homes  
Bolding, Lloyd & Evelyn  
Chili's Restaurant  
Christus Trinity Clinic  
Clayton's East & West  
Kilgore College  
Kilgore Economic Development Corporation  
Melissa Azzam Insurance – All State

Mobbs Builders  
Nichols Transportation  
Pak-Sher Company  
Rivers Recycling, LLC  
Star International, Inc.  
The Back Porch on Broadway  
Walgreens Company  
WrapMaster, Inc.

Find a Chamber Member in the Business Directory at  
[www.KilgoreChamber.com](http://www.KilgoreChamber.com).

## Kilgore College Martin Luther King, Jr. Dual Credit Scholarship Breakfast

Providing Access to Post-Secondary Education for All!

Friday, January 12, 2018  
7:30a.m. to 9 a.m.

Devall Ballroom  
Devall Student Center  
Kilgore College Campus

### Table Sponsorships:

- \$1,000 commitment
- Table for 8 for the event
- Signage at the event and recognition in program
- Acknowledgement in all press releases and social media

All proceeds will benefit scholarships designed to transition high school dual-credit students to full-time students at Kilgore College.

*"The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically.  
Intelligence plus character- that is the goal of education.  
-Martin Luther King, Jr.*



## Kilgore Chamber of Commerce

813 N. Kilgore St.  
903-984-5022

[info@kilgorechamber.com](mailto:info@kilgorechamber.com)

We would like to Thank the Chamber, our Community and our Customers for the Growth they have helped us experience in Kilgore. Proud to be growing along with the Kilgore Chamber of Commerce and our Community.

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## Morning Brew

Coffee + Conversation = Connections

Thursday, December 14, 2017 ~ 8:00—9:00 A.M.  
238 Lawrence St., Kilgore, TX



Attending Morning Brew is a great WAY to make business connections!

Join us and take advantage of meeting potential customers, share your promotional message with other businesses, make a business announcement, and learn more about the host business. Door prizes and breakfast refreshments top off the morning.

*What's not to like about making new business friends?*

A Member Program of the Kilgore Chamber of Commerce

## CALENDAR



### Chamber Meetings & Events - December

Nov 12	E4 Leadership – Session III	8:00 – 4:30	Chamber/KISD/KC
Dec 14	Morning Brew	8:00 am	DeGraffenried Dentistry
Dec 14	Executive Committee	12 Noon	Chamber Office
Dec 18	Board of Directors Meeting	12 Noon	Chamber Office
Dec 19	Ambassador Meeting	12 Noon	Brigitta's Restaurant
Dec 25	Merry Christmas!!	Office Closed	
Dec 26	Christmas Holiday	Office Closed	
Jan 01	Happy New Year!	Office Closed	
Jan 04	E4 Leadership Steering Committee	11:30 am	Chamber Office
Jan 04	Relationship Climate Team Mtg.	11:30 am	Austin Bank

### Community Events - December

Dec 8-10	Texas Shakespeare Festival presents "It's A Wonderful Life"		
	Live Radio Play	Various	815 Houston Street
Dec 9	Christmas Cookies with Santa	11:00 am	Downtown Kilgore
Dec 16	Jingle All The Way	11:00 am	Downtown Kilgore
Dec 16	Classic Christmas Movies Marathon	11am-6pm	Texan Theater
Dec 23	Stuff The Stocking	10:30am	Downtown Kilgore
Dec 31	New Year's Eve Bash	6:30pm-12:00am	The Back Porch on Broadway
Dec 31	New Year's Eve Celebration	5:00pm-12:00am	Jack Ryan's Steak & Chophouse

Go to KilgoreChamber.com or VisitKilgore.com for more event information. If you have a community event you wish to have listed on the Kilgore Calendar please send your information via email to [info@kilgorechamber.com](mailto:info@kilgorechamber.com), drop it by the Chamber office at 813 N. Kilgore Street. We will be happy to share your event information on the community calendar and via Facebook at KilgoreChamber and VisitKilgore.

## Protecting small business from fraud, identity theft

For the self-employed and owners of small businesses, whose time and energies are devoted to growing the company, data security often falls in priority.

Protecting your business and your clients' financial data is critical to averting the kind of disaster that could tank your business dreams. Join us and learn how you can protect yourself and your business.

- What are the common forms of identity theft and fraud? How can you protect yourself and your business?
- How can you prepare in advance?
- What are ways fraud can happen to your business?



Tuesday, January 23, 2018

Kilgore Economic Development Corporation

1001 Synergy Blvd, Ste 300

11:30am—1:30pm

Cost: \$25 per person (lunch included)



Reservations required by Friday, January 19

Kilgore Chamber of Commerce - 903-984-5022 or email to [info@kilgorechamber.com](mailto:info@kilgorechamber.com)

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**Walmart**  
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**2nd Place – Best Use of Theme (Business)**



**Laird Hill Baptist Church**  
**1st Place – Best Decorated (Group)**  
**1st Place – Best Use of Theme (Group)**



**Stone Ridge Baptist Church**  
**3rd Place – Best Use of Theme (Group)**



**Rusk County Electric Cooperative, Inc.**  
**3rd Place – Best Decorated (Business)**  
**3rd Place – Best Use of Theme (Business)**



**LEFT: Friends of the Kilgore Library**  
**2nd Place – Best Decorated (Group)**  
**2nd Place – Best Use of Theme**



**RIGHT: Vernon Rivers**  
**3rd Place – Best Decorated (Group)**