

# Chamber Connection

Upcoming Events & Photos

New Members & Renewals



Volume 7, No. 13 • September 2020 • www.kilgorechamber.com



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## Chamber Membership: The Best Investment You Can Make in Your Early Career

Some people think chamber membership is outdated, like it's something their grandparents used to do. Maybe you and your friends even feel that way. You might think that you can do all the networking you need to do online. You may even have hundreds of thousands of Instagram followers and figure chamber membership is the last thing you need for your career or for your business.

But chamber membership is one of the strongest Investments you can make in your future and it's also one of the least expensive with the best reputation and return on investment.

No, it's not your grandpa's chamber but membership can be essential to your personal and business growth for about what you pay for a cup of coffee every day.

Here's a glimpse of the amazing payoffs you can expect from chamber membership:

### Enjoy Amazing Experiences and Make Things Happen

By getting involved with the chamber you'll meet people nearby in every stage of their careers. You can find a mentor and be one if you'd like. You can attend professional events and possibly have a hand in the economic development of your community.

Have you traveled recently to another city and witnessed something really cool in their community? Did you wish your town had the same thing? It won't happen with wishes alone. You need to align yourself with a group that has the power to make things happen. The chamber is well-connected and can help bring your ideas to fruition.

### Develop Partnerships

Today's businesses use all sorts of influencer marketing and other non-traditional partnerships that help market products and help them grow. Being a member of the chamber can help you meet business professionals who can take your business to the next level.

### Don't have your own business?

The chamber is also an excellent way to network for career advancement and hear about positions that are open before they hit the internet giving you a jump on the application process.

Chamber members are also helpful in assisting you to start your own business. They can give you advice on things to avoid as well as government policies and best practices you should be following. When starting

a business, you need a lot more expertise than what's found in a YouTube video. With chamber membership, you can connect with people who have "been there and done that", sometimes multiple times successfully and some not so successfully.

### Find Your Tribe

As you become more established in your career, you may notice that some of your earlier friends from school begin to drift away. You may also notice that making new friends is more difficult now that you're out of school. The chamber is another way that you can meet like-minded professionals outside of work. There are often several specialized groups within the chamber that you can join. Groups like those with a women's or a young professional's focus can help you



Jill R. McCartney, IOM, CCEO-AP  
President & CEO

find the kind of people you want to spend time with.

### Establish a Reputation

If you're just starting your business--or you operate a business online--you may quickly realize the hesitancy some people have in

See MEMBERSHIP, Page 3

## Testimonials

When I opened my small business in Kilgore in 2008, I joined the Kilgore Chamber of Commerce almost immediately. Over the last decade, I've watched the Chamber grow into an invaluable asset for this community. They work tirelessly to help members with everything from being more visible in the community through social media and community events, to being a strong voice for member interests with both local and state governmental bodies.

Most recently, during the current pandemic, they provided resources to my business and all of Kilgore that helped many keep their doors open. The chamber was my most reliable source of information and news that was critical to our survival during this time. The leadership worked tirelessly to form partnerships with local government, state government, and other relevant organizations in order to ensure that all members were informed and supported.

After almost 12 years of membership, I can tell you without any hesitation that it has been one of the wisest investments I've ever made for my business.



- Dr. Christopher R. Gratton, DC,  
Owner, Gratton Chiropractic  
Chairman of the Board 2019/20

CAN I GET A WITNESS?  
Wow, what a bargain! Our Kilgore Chamber of Commerce has been tested by fire during this COVID-19 year and they have proven themselves up to the job. Always first to email members with information and updates on the quickly changing mandates; simplifying the instructions for how to file for relief grants and loans; keeping merchants informed with easy to understand COVID updates on their website including printable downloads; and first to offer downtown merchants city funded grants to help us keep the lights on.

Besides all of that, they truly care about our downtown merchants and our city brand as a whole. Very connected and always available. Continually finding new affordable opportunities for us to advertise. Jill McCartney and her team are actively on the job of making downtown Kilgore the place to set up shop. We appreciate y'all, keep up the great work!



- Fred & Vivian Gebhardt,  
Kilgore Mercantile & Music

AEP-SWEPCO and the Kilgore Chamber of Commerce have enjoyed a positive relationship for over 37 years (since I was six days old!) As a regulated company with a defined service territory, it is of utmost importance to SWEPCO that our business environment is robust and attractive to newcomers. The Kilgore Chamber of Commerce has collaborated with its members and the City of Kilgore to create a business environment where current businesses can flourish and new businesses can thrive. Some of the Chamber's most important work can be seen in their Advocacy work. I've personally witnessed our Chamber advocate for our businesses in the areas of Education, Transportation, Economic Development and Health with our elected officials locally and from Austin and Washington D.C. We have been most recently impressed with the Chamber's efforts to mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19 on our members and their businesses.

Well done, Kilgore Chamber of Commerce! Lead on!



- Mark A. Robinson, External  
Affairs Manager, AEP-SWEPCO  
2019/20 Chair Elect, Kilgore  
Chamber of Commerce

The Kilgore Chamber of Commerce is Creative, energetic and loves putting their members in the spotlight! Being a member is NOT just being a member! They learn about your business and offer lots of opportunities to show what makes you special.

If you want a chamber experience where you aren't forgotten please give them a call.



-Robert Brown, Owner of Lennis  
Design LLC web/graphic/print  
Designer with 20+ years of experience

Business with friends! That's what you get with help of the Kilgore Chamber of Commerce. In a small city connecting with people is how business serves well and how business grows. With the support of the Chamber here in Kilgore, connection to others in business and to those just learning about our fabulous city just happens. The monthly gatherings and the promotional efforts to help local businesses meet new clients and customers are a superb return on investment.

At J de Graffenried Dentistry relationships are critical. During the 30 years we have worked with the Chamber, the connections we have made have not only brought us patients, but have also built relationships with local businesses that provide so much of the support we need. And a huge side benefit is the fostering of other community relationships that do so much to make Kilgore the great town that people want to move their families and businesses to.

I always look forward to Chamber events and meetings. I hope I get to see you at one soon.



- Dr. Joey De Graffenried, DDS,  
Owner, J de Graffenried Dentistry  
and East Texas Implant Surgical Center



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Dr. J.T. Roberts



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## Talking Tourism



**Ryan Polk**  
Tourism Mgr.

Fall in love with Kilgore! As the seasons change and the days get shorter, the pumpkin spice comes out, and there is still a lot to do in Kilgore, Texas. Grab your bike and hit the trail this season so you can see the foliage turn from green to bright golds, scarlets, and rusts. It's one of the seasons to safely #VisitKilgore!

**FALL FUN!**

**Sept 9 - Oct 24 | East Texas Oil Museum 40th Anniversary Exhibit (10am - 5pm)**

Join the East Texas Oil Museum in celebrating their 40th anniversary with this limited-time exhibit open for viewing from September 5 through October 24, during normal business hours. #happy40etom

**Sept 19 | Kilgore Geekend 2020**

In its seventh year, Kilgore Geekend is celebrating by once again returning to Historic Downtown Kilgore! Geekend is revisiting its roots for this year's event. Look for all the action on the sidewalks in Historic Downtown Kilgore with unique vendors, Cosplay, activities, performances, and food! Come for fun and shop downtown merchants this year.

Find out more info. at [www.facebook.com/Kilgoregeekend/events/](http://www.facebook.com/Kilgoregeekend/events/)

**Sept 26 - Oct 28 | St. Luke's Pumpkin Patch**

It's not autumn in Kilgore without the annual St. Luke's Pumpkin Patch. While this year may be different, they have planned a festive series of events that the whole family can safely enjoy! Be sure to check out all their swag for sale, from t-shirts to face masks; they have it all.

Find out more on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/PumpkinPatchStLukes](http://www.facebook.com/PumpkinPatchStLukes)

**September 26 | FREE Kilgore Cruise Night (5pm-8pm)**

Sponsored by the LONE STAR LUG NUTS Car

Club and Kilgore Mercantile and Music, this FREE event occurs on the last Saturday in Historic Downtown Kilgore. There will be over 100 vintage cars on display.

**October 2 | Ghost Hunt in Downtown Kilgore (9pm)**

Join Kilgore Geektopia for a Ghost Hunt in downtown Kilgore! Led by an experienced ghost hunter, this is going to be both thrilling and fun. Who knows what you'll discover!

Cost: \$10 per person All Hunt attendees must be at least 12 years old.

Reserve a spot at RC Comics' Geektopia, or inbox the Geektopia Facebook page [www.facebook.com/Kilgoregeekend](http://www.facebook.com/Kilgoregeekend)

**October 2 | Avalon Faire Renaissance Festival with the Kats! (6-9pm)**

Avalon Faire returns with social distancing this year.

Plan for Games, Food, and Music!

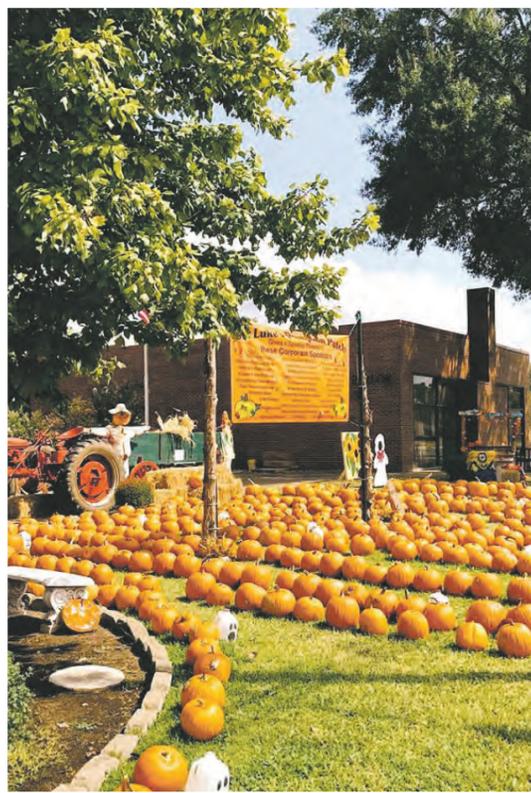
Chicken dance competitions, beer relay, beer braggart contest, stein holding contest, axe throw, archery, darts, three-legged races, bounce house, obstacle course, horseshoes, and corn hole! Food! German brats, smoked sausages, German potato salad, roasted pork, sauerkraut, beer-potato soup, and strudel! Come one come all for fun and an escape into our medieval past.

We love to feature Kilgore photos on social media, in our newsletters, on our website, and in our visitors guide! Just use #VisitKilgore on your social post for a chance to be featured!

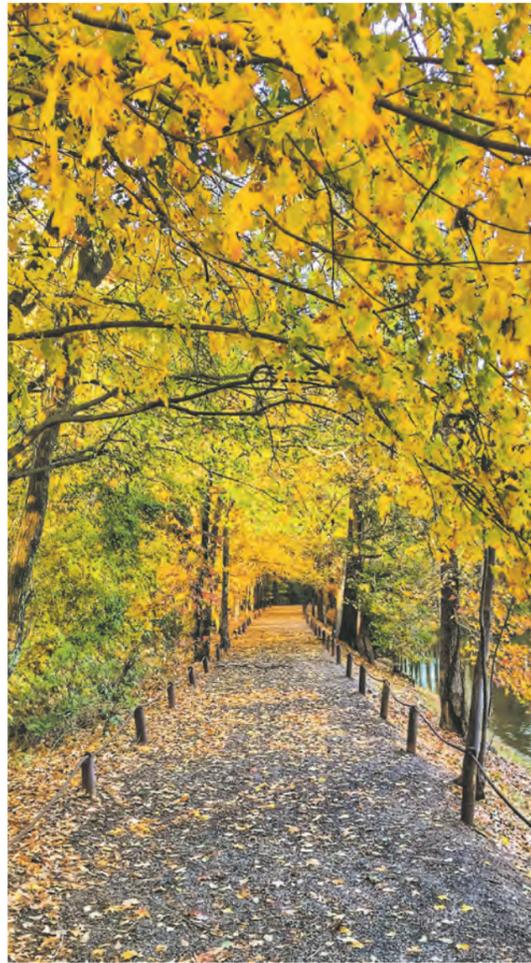
It's one of the favorite seasons to safely #VisitKilgore



Kilgore Cruise Night by The Brother Garcia



St Luke's Pumpkin Patch by Visit Kilgore



A canopy of fall colors at Synergy Park by Visit Kilgore

Month of **HALLOWEEN**

**KICKOFF WEEKEND OCTOBER 2ND**

**GHOST HUNT**

### St. Luke's Pumpkin Patch 2020 EVENT SCHEDULE

Be on the lookout for more in-person and virtual events



**Decorate the Patch**  
Saturday, September 26  
9:00am-12:00pm

**Pumpkin Unload**  
Wednesday, September 30  
5:30pm



**Pumpkin Patch Sunday**  
Sunday, October 4  
Drive-Thru Chili Lunch (10:30am)  
\$5 - a bowl of chili & cornbread

**Pumpkin Run**  
Saturday, October 17  
Plans pending



**Pumpkin Carving & Pumpkin Glow**  
Saturday, October 24  
6:00pm

**Trunk-or-Treat**  
Wednesday, October 28  
6:00pm



Follow us on Instagram and Facebook to stay up to date on all the great things happening in the St. Luke's Pumpkin Patch.



@stlukespumpkinpatch



pumpkinpatchstlukes



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# New Member!

Jack Ryan's Steak and Chophouse

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



## Member Investor RENEWALS

Complete Printing & Publishing  
 East Texas Treatment Center  
 Edward Jones - Emily Arp  
 Falcon Resources, Inc.  
 Gateway Travel Plaza  
 CHRISTUS Good Shepherd  
 Emergency Center - Kilgore  
 Hydessco, LLC  
 Kilgore Eye Care Center

Kilgore Integrated Health  
 Kilgore Tire Center, Inc.  
 Lions Club  
 Manpower  
 MMI Insurance Agency, LLC  
 Skeeter Products, Inc.  
 Texas Farm Bureau Insurance  
 Texas Museum of Broadcasting  
 & Communication

**2020 Texas Tea**  
**WOMEN IN BUSINESS**  
 THURSDAY, October 29  
 NATIONAL GUARD ARMORY  
 1807 STONE RD • KILGORE  
 6 PM - 8:30 PM

**SCHEDULE**  
 Shopping & Reception | Dinner Program & Awards | Purse Raffle

**WOMEN IN BUSINESS AWARDS**  
*The Rising Star The Shining Star*  
*Lifetime Star Achiever*

Ladies, our theme this year is the Kentucky Derby - be sure to break out your spring colors and your matching spring heels or sandals. Most importantly, your brightest and biggest statement of the evening will of course be your hat!

Tickets	By October 16	From October 19
Reserved Corporate Table for 8	\$500	\$625
Reserved Corporate Table for 4	\$275	\$325
Individual Tickets	\$50	\$70

**INFORMATION & TICKETS**  
 Go to [KilgoreChamber.com/Events](http://KilgoreChamber.com/Events) | Call 903.984.5022 | Email: [LMorgan@KilgoreChamber.com](mailto:LMorgan@KilgoreChamber.com)

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Fall at the World's Richest Acre by Visit Kilgore

**"The purpose of the Kilgore Chamber of Commerce & Visitors Bureau is to cultivate a strong business and industrial environment in Kilgore, creating a vibrant place to live, learn, work and play."**

### KILGORE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE STAFF

Jill McCartney, President/CEO  
 Lisa Morgan, Member Services Manager  
 Ryan Polk, Tourism Manager

### 2019-20 CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### EXECUTIVE BOARD

Dr. Chris Gratton, Chairman (Gratton Chiropractic)  
 Mark Robinson, Chair Elect (AEP/SWEPCO)  
 Robert Young, Vice Chair (Skeeter Products)  
 Bobbie Hurley O'Dell, Vice Chair (Arpc Valves & Controls)  
 Billie Mims, Treasurer (Austin Bank)  
 James Murphy, Past Chair (Republic Services)

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tim Capps, Gabriel/Jordan GMC Buick  
 Joe Stephens, Brookshire's  
 Blayne Cole, Noble Roofing  
 Erin Brogoitti, The Ward Agency  
 Jack Moore, Whataburger

#### EX-OFFICIO

Richard Nash, KISD  
 Dr. Brenda Kays, Kilgore College  
 Jana Russell, KEDC  
 Josh Selleck, City of Kilgore  
 David Cleveland, East Texas Council of Government

### MEMBERSHIP From Page 1

ordering from someone they know nothing about. If you sell on the internet, there can be even more of a hesitation because no one wants to hand over their credit card information to an entity they're not sure will be around to deliver. Joining the chamber can lend legitimacy to your business while you create a reputation for yourself.

#### Get Free Learning

Sure, you can learn a lot from YouTube. But there are some professional skills and topics that you just want to hear an expert in the industry talk about. The problem with that is that it costs a lot of money to attend these experts ses-

sions. If you're just starting out, you likely don't have that kind of money in your budget or if you do it's often allocated to something you'll see a more immediate return on like marketing or advertising.

One of the chamber's best kept secrets is that they offer sessions on topics that are important to professionals. Most of them are free to members. Some may have a small cost for lunch or breakfast. And unlike a YouTube video, these sessions allow you to interact with the speakers. Sometimes that interaction can be the beginning of a business friendship.

If you are a young professional who is eager to succeed in your company or

business, consider a chamber membership. It's one of the best ways to grow your network and one of the least expensive. The return on investment and the experiences you'll receive as a chamber member far outweigh the minimum cost of membership.

It's possible to grow your business without it but think of chamber membership as a Fast Pass to business success. Membership can help you get to the front of the line a whole lot faster than standing around with the rest of your peers watching videos.

*We Are Kilgore,  
 Jill R. McCartney, IOM  
 President & CEO  
 Kilgore Chamber  
 of Commerce*

**2020-2021 Kilgore Chamber of Commerce**  
 Chairman's Star Member  
 President's Star Member

**Gabriel/Jordan Buick GMC**  
**Skeeter Products**

**To Our Healthcare Heroes,  
 Thank You for Caring**

**We know you love seniors as much as we do.**  
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**KILGORE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & VISITORS BUREAU INVITES YOU TO ATTEND SEPTEMBER'S**



**Morning Brew**

**Thursday, September 17, 2020**  
8:00 - 9:00 a.m.



**1108 N. KILGORE STREET**  
**KILGORE, TX (CHAMBER OFFICE)**  
FEEL FREE TO WEAR A MASK & WE WILL HAVE HAND SANITIZER

Morning Brew, one of the Chamber's business connection events, was sponsored and held at HD Hydraulics. Thank you to Bryant and Julie Stokes and staff for hosting an outstanding event! If your business is interested in hosting a Morning Brew, contact Lisa Morgan at the Kilgore Chamber 903-984-5022.

## UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS



### Community Events – September/October

Sept 17	Morning Brew (Hosted by Phillips & Gilchrist, LLP)	8:00 am	Kilgore Chamber
Sept 17	Executive Board Meeting	12:00 pm	Kilgore Chamber
Sept 19	Kilgore Geekend 2020	10:00 am	Downtown Kilgore
Sept 18	Golf Classic	8:00 am	Meadowbrook Golf Club
Sept 21	Board Meeting	12:00 pm	Kilgore Chamber
Sept 26	Kilgore Cruise Night	5:00 pm	Downtown Kilgore
Sept 26 – Oct 28	St. Luke's Pumpkin Patch		St. Luke's Methodist Church
Sept 29	Capitol Connect (Virtual)	10:00 am	
Oct 2	Ghost Hunt	9:00 pm	RC Comics Geektopia
Oct 3	Trivia	11:00 am	Loco Meaux
Oct 11	Bluegrass & Blue Bell Acoustic Jam	2:00 pm	Kilgore Mercantile
Oct 12	Governmental Affairs Meet	11:30 am	Kilgore Chamber
Oct 13	Ambassador Lunch	11:30 am	TBA
Oct 11	Bluegrass & Blue Bell Acoustic Jam	2:00 pm	Kilgore Mercantile
Oct 17	Downtown Kilgore Vintage Market	9:00 am	Downtown Kilgore
Oct 17	Pumpkin Run	TBD	St. Luke's Methodist Church
Oct 17	Goblins & Ghouls Race Night	5:00pm	Lonestar Speedway
Oct 24	Pumpkin Carving & Pumpkin Glow	6:00 pm	St. Luke's Methodist Church
Oct 28	Trunk-or-Treat	6:00 pm	St. Luke's Methodist Church
Oct 31	Kilgore Cruise Night	5:00 pm	Downtown Kilgore

**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 1108 North Kilgore St. We will be happy to share your event information on the community calendar and via Facebook at KilgoreChamber and VisitKilgore.



August's Morning Brew was held at HD Hydraulics with The Circle Café catering with their delicious Breakfast Burritos.

# CAPITOL CONNECT

## A TEXAS LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

**10:00 a.m. Tuesday, September 29, 2020**

**This years event will take place "Virtually"**

**10:00 a.m.**

**Individual Reservation \$20**

Reservations required. Sign up online: [KilgoreChamber.com/Events](http://KilgoreChamber.com/Events) Calendar RSVP to [lmorgan@kilgorechamber.com](mailto:lmorgan@kilgorechamber.com) or call 903-984-5022

**Join us as we advocate for regional public policy affecting our East Texas business community. Expect to hear timely information and legislative updates on the upcoming 87th Legislative Sessions. We are anticipating a robust conversation with our local legislators!**

**FEATURING**



Sen. Bryan Hughes  
DISTRICT 1



Rep. Cole Hefner  
DISTRICT 5



Rep. Matt Schaefer  
DISTRICT 6



Rep. Jay Dean  
DISTRICT 7



Rep. Chris Paddie  
DISTRICT 9



Rep. Travis Clardy  
DISTRICT 11



HOSTED BY **East Texas Coalition**

Kilgore Chamber of Commerce, Lindale Area Chamber of Commerce, Longview Chamber of Commerce, & Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce

This Capital Connect will be moderated by Mr. Mark Robinson of AEP/SWEPSCO. We will be utilizing GoToMeeting. Once you sign up and pay for the Webinar, you will be sent the login registration information.



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