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Chamber connection



KILGORE
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

FEBRUARY 2023 • www.kilgorechamber.com • 1108 N. Kilgore Street • 903-984-5022

What Does It Mean to Be a Chamber Member? The Hidden Value Behind Chamber Membership



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

Traditionally, a chamber of commerce was a membership organization that supports the interests of its business members. It is not affiliated with the government, nor is it a charity. The chamber is separate from the Better Business Bureau. Now that we've explained the traditional notion of chamber membership, let's dive into what it means to be a member of a chamber of commerce today. If you think chambers are outdated, it's time you take another look.

As a chamber member, you are represented by a powerful organization. Because they are not government-affiliated, chambers weather the political storms, cannot get voted out of office, and always represent the business community. And since healthy communities are good places to work with strong employment opportunities, a chamber helps all members of a community.

Chamber members are a critical part of the following work in your community.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A CHAMBER MEMBER?

There is a long list of bene-

fits to chamber membership. But those benefits are only the surface of what you and your employees receive from joining. If you want to be part of something larger than yourself and your business, striving to improve opportunities in your community, chamber membership is an ideal way to do that.

Volunteerism and Cause-based Marketing

There are many ways to volunteer in the chamber. From assisting with events to running educational webinars, serving on the board to working with the scholarship program or chamber's foundation. Your skills or sponsorships will be leveraged in a way that helps you increase your network, your knowledge, and your business exposure.

When you volunteer—and the chamber shares that information with others—your business is aligned with the cause in the eyes of community members. The Kilgore Area Chamber embraces many causes to improve the quality of life in the Kilgore area. Check with us to find out what our goals are or view our new strategic plan. You may be surprised by all of the community efforts we champion:

- Strategic partnerships with key stakeholders
- Workforce development
- Safe streets with our Transportation Committee
- Tax-reduction, pro-business, education advocacy
- Mental health initiatives

Many people who question membership have a narrow-minded view of the chamber as a "business only" entity without realizing that



every issue in the community affects business. If the community is not seen as a prosperous one, people won't want to live, work, or open a business there. Being pro-community is pro-business.

You can likely help with the causes that are important to you through chamber work, while also strengthening your business and growing your network with cause-based marketing.

Community Leadership and Responsibility

Chamber members are viewed as reputable and dedicated to creating (or continuing) a flourishing community. When you become a chamber member, you are announcing to the community that your business is here to stay and

you're investing in the success of the area. Through membership, you are choosing to be part of an organization that has championed the cause of business for many years.

Pro-Diversity

At first glance, you may assume the chamber is comprised of a very homogenous mix of business owners. That is no longer the case. In many communities, the chamber is leading diversity initiatives. Chambers understand the importance of representing every aspect of business and ensuring each voice is heard. Representing minority- and women-owned businesses is a responsibility that chambers take seriously because a chamber can affect change. By amplifying the business owners' voices and convening com-

munity leaders, business owners, and employees, chambers are leading diversity initiatives across the country. They're advocating for legislation, hosting town halls, and providing educational DEI programs.

Chambers often recognize what the business community needs before individual businesses can address it themselves. As a member of the chamber, you are part of helping traditionally underserved populations discover the joy, opportunity, and challenges of business ownership.

Being a chamber member in the 21st century goes beyond the list of benefits you'll see in the membership brochure. Sure, those items are good investments for your business, and they can save you money and help you

grow but the chamber offers much more than that. The chamber is leading the efforts to make your community a better place to live, work, and play for everyone. And membership offers you a highly visible opportunity to be part of that excitement.

Give us a call at 903.984.5022 or check out our website at www.KilgoreChamber.com and click the big yellow box that says JOIN NOW! We can't wait to help your business grow, assist in strengthening our area, and provide you and your employees with fantastic opportunities to be involved.

*Jill R. McCartney White, IOM
Kilgore Area Chamber of
Commerce
President & CEO*

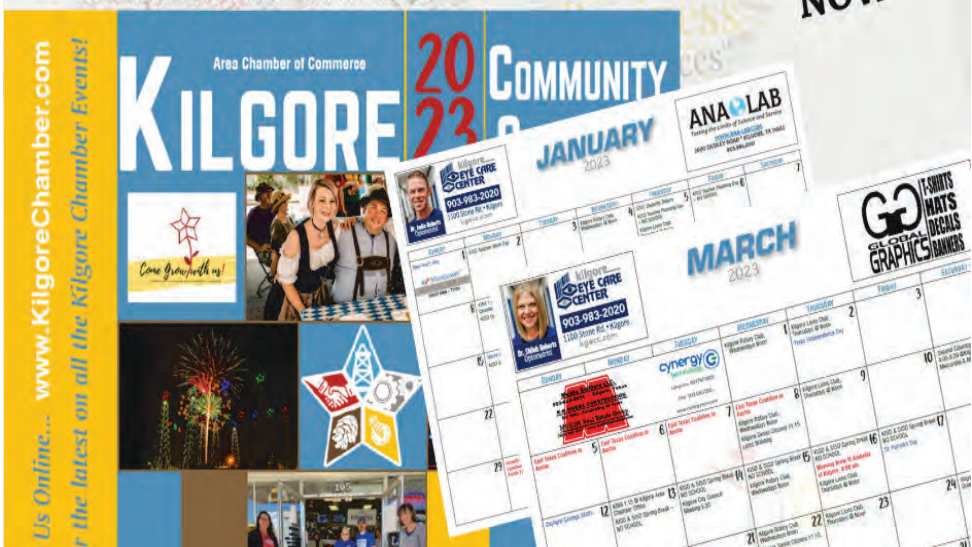
2023 Kilgore Community Calendar

available at

- 1108 N. Kilgore Street
- Kilgore Mercantile & Music
- East Texas Professional Credit Union
- East Texas Hardware
- Citizens Bank
- Downtown D'Lites Cafe

FREE

Available NOW



UPCOMING EVENTS & MEETINGS

FEBRUARY & MARCH

Feb 23	Star Gala	6:00pm	Texas Theater
March 1	EMT's Meeting	11:30am	Kilgore Chamber
March 5-7	East Texas Coalition Goes to Austin		
March 14	Ambassador Lunch	11:30am	TBD
March 16	Morning Brew	8:00am	Arabella of Kilgore
March 16	Executive Board Meeting	12:00pm	Kilgore Chamber
March 20	Board Meeting	11:30am	Kilgore Chamber

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 Imorgan@kilgorechamber.com, drop it by the Chamber office at 1108 N. Kilgore Street. We will be happy to share your event information on the community calendar and via Facebook at KilgoreChamber.

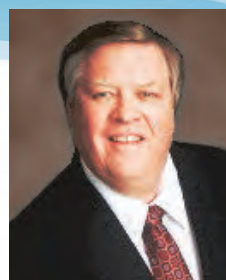
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MORNING BREW

POWERED BY
KILGORE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Thursday
March 16, 2023
8:00 - 9:00 am
2103 Chandler Street
Kilgore, Texas

Come Grow with us!

Morning Brew, one of the Chamber's business connection events, was sponsored by HD HYDRAULICS. Thank you to Bryant & Julie Stokes 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.



WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

- CHRISTUS Good Shepherd Health System
- East Texas CASA
- Oil Masters of Kilgore INC
- Power House Coatings & Fabrication
- Woolley Tool, Inc.

MEMBER INVESTOR RENEWALS

- Arbor Grace Guest Care
- East Texas Salt Water Disposal Co.
- Edward Jones - Emily Arp
- Edward Jones - Joseph Wright
- Edward Jones - Reece Nichols
- Enerflex Energy Systems, Inc.
- Five Starz Magic Detail
- Glen Hollow Apartments
- Hudson Printing & Graphic Design
- Judge Bill Stoudt
- K.K. Mobbs Contruction
- Kilgore News Herald
- McDonald's Kilgore
- Orgill Inc.
- Rahab's Retreat and Ranch
- Regions Bank
- Rusk County Well Service Co., Inc.
- Sabine Pipe, Inc.
- The Shops on Main
- Flowers by Design
- The University of Texas at Tyler

Find a Chamber Member in the Business Directory at www.KilgoreChamber.com.

The purpose of the Kilgore Area Chamber of Commerce is to promote a strong business and industrial environment in the Kilgore area.



WE...

- ADVOCATE** on behalf of our business community as well as educate business leaders regarding public policy issues relevant to their businesses.
- ACCELERATE** the economic prosperity by focusing on the unique mix of people, places, and products that define the Kilgore, Texas area.
- COLLABORATE** to strengthen the Kilgore economy.
- INNOVATE** each year in order to keep our members active and interested in our programs and events.
- EDUCATE** our members with our BizConnect series, advocacy efforts, and the member to member opportunities.



"The Purpose of the Kilgore Area Chamber of Commerce is to promote a strong business and industrial environment in the Kilgore area.

5 Core Competencies: Accelerate, Advocate, Collaborate, Educate, Innovate"

2023 Kilgore Area Chamber of Commerce

1108 N. KILGORE STREET | KILGORE, TEXAS 75662 | 903-984-5022



KILGORE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE STAFF
Jill R. McCartney, IOM President & CEO
Lisa Morgan, IOM, Member Services Manager

EXECUTIVE BOARD

- Robert Young, Chairman (Skeeter)
- Erin Brogoitti, Chair Elect (HUB International)
- Tim Capps, Vice Chair (Gabriel/Jordan Buick GMC)
- Kevin Offering, Vice Chair (East Texas Hardware)
- Blayne Cole, Treasurer (Noble Roofing Bullard Associates, LLC)
- Bobbie Hurley O'Dell, Chairman (Arco Valves & Controls) Past Chairman
- Jill McCartney White, Secretary (Kilgore Area Chamber of Commerce)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Jack Moore (Whataburger)
- Ubaldo Meraz (East Texas Professional Credit Union)
- John-Michael Spates (Orgill)
- Nichole Cole (Business Computer Solutions, BCS)
- Sharla Shead, FNP-C (Christus Trinity Clinic)
- Brent Rice (State Farm Insurance)
- Gene Keenon (Republic Services)

EX-OFFICIO

- Dr. Andy Baker (KISD)
- Dr. Brenda Kays (Kilgore College)
- Lisa Denton (Kilgore Economic Development Corp.)
- Josh Selleck (City of Kilgore)
- David Cleveland (East Texas Council of Governments)

Proud Chamber Member for Over 25 Years



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KILGORE
AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
s.t.a.r. gala success tradition achievements relationships

Star Gala

Thank to our 2023 Sponsors




2023 Business of the Year Nominee's	2023 New Business of the Year Nominee's	2023 Industrial Business of the Year Nominee's	2023 The STAR Award Nominee's
Automotive Super Center #5 Business Computer Solutions (BCS) David M. Hayes, CPA Gabriel/Jordan Buick GMC Kelly Tractor	Camfil USA The Bliss House	Communication & Power Ind. (CPI) Energy Weldfab Drover Energy Services Geonix HD Hydraulics Woolley Tool	Brookshire's Downtown D'Lites Energy Weldfab McDaniel's Quality Body Works - Kilgore National Wholesale Supply



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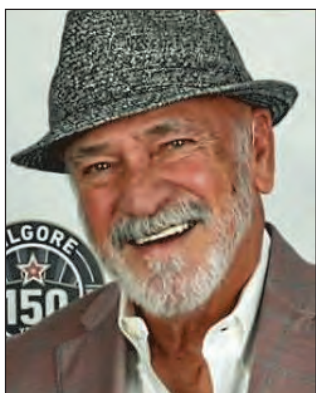
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City Connection



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Looking back, traveling forward



Bill Woodall
Kilgore Community Relations Manager

For darned near four years, I've been hanging out – part-time – at Kilgore City Hall, operating under the watchful eye and merciless thumb of City Manager Josh Selleck and Planning Director Carol Windham.

Initially in the form of a personal “column” for the Kilgore News Herald and more recently in this corner of the Chamber of Commerce newsletter, I've labored (metaphorically speaking) to update newspaper readers on municipal development and progress, all from the perspective of an observer inside the city hall. Some of those updates have described historical events and others have described current events.

I was initially invited to join the (surprisingly hard-working) staff here as an intern, tasked with digitizing the city's oldest documents. Documents

predating Kilgore's incorporations have been scanned and named, folded in with digital files now as current as last month's city council meeting. Many of those are available to you by way of the city's website: cityofkilgore.com -> government -> minutes archives.

Hundreds of entertaining hours later, the contents of some of those documents still live near the front of my hippocampus.

For example... O.L. Crigler Company from Longview paved that block of Kilgore Street between Main and North streets, the first paved street (or portion thereof) in town. Crigler later secured the contract to build the still-useful swimming pool for \$25,970 even though he, in large part, financed the project himself.

For example... Names pivotal in the development of Kilgore are still familiar names. The first city commission was a three-person panel led by Mayor J Malcolm Crim with commissioners Roy H Laird and Ben Laird.

Two years later, April 1933, Crim would be succeeded by Roy H Laird. Later – but still on Mayor Laird's watch – in 1949 the city awarded contracts for the construction of what was first called Memorial Hospital; Mayor Laird and his wife, Annie B. pledged \$100,000

toward its construction. He died in office before the hospital was finished. Annie B. Laird fulfilled the pledge and then set aside part of her estate to fund healthcare here in perpetuity. The hospital was re-named Roy H. Laird Memorial Hospital. Even today, that trust fund is an important part of the financ-

For example... The gentlemen who ran the town back in the day generally travelled under their initials rather than their first name. The municipal officers ballot in 1951 listed E.C. Elder, L.P. Barton, W.S. Barber, W.R. Yazell and John L. Hill.

Notes from City Hall

Just ahead, with help from an infrastructure grant, Commerce Street will be rebuilt from the traffic circle to Harris Street – while less than a block away TxDOT is rebuilding the circle and Hwy 135 south.

Could it be worse? Please regard the photo below, taken during the 1931 oil boom

song just before they died. While perhaps not the most beautiful prose I've composed, this is my swan song.

In a couple of weeks, I'm hitching a travel trailer to my aging pickup and heading off for seven months as host of a campground beside the Allegheny River in extreme northern Pennsylvania. I'll



ing plan for the new Kilgore College/Christus health sciences center and emergency room.

For example... In 1956, one could rent a swimsuit at the pool. The price, for either gender, was 30 cents. Properly suited, they could then rent a towel for 15 cents.

must include an update on street construction.

Even though it appears the project won't be completed by the end of May, work on Main Street continues through the rainy season. Crews are ripping out the worst sections and preparing to replace them with new concrete.

while streets were a collection of mud holes belly deep on a horse or mule team.

More than two millennia past, classical Greek philosophers in their writings used the phrase “swan song.” Folklore in the Before Christ centuries held that swans sang their most beautiful

be back in East Texas before the next snowpocalypse but it's unlikely I'll be offered a second chance at this office and this opportunity to keep you updated on the view from my (windowless) office at the back of city hall.

It's been a treat. As Roy and Dale might say, “keep smiling until then.”



Place **YOUR AD** in next month's **City Connection**

Call 903.984.2593

KILGORE NEWS HERALD

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