

CITY MANAGER'S BIWEEKLY UPDATE

September 1, 2021

UPCOMING EVENTS

- September 9th – KHS Homecoming Parade Downtown
- September 10th – KHS Homecoming
- **September 14th – City Council Meeting with Budget and Tax Rate Public Hearing**
- Oktober 16th – KILGORE OKTOBERFEST!!! 1 – 9 P.M. in Historic Downtown Kilgore

HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

After 23 years as a manager for a nationwide industrial supply company, Ryan Riley found his new professional home with the City of Kilgore. In fact, he found two – sort of an occupational duplex.

In April, after four years as a volunteer with the Kilgore Rescue Squad, Ryan was named Rescue Chief, succeeding Edgar Rachal after Edgar's retirement. Five months later, following the retirement of Danny Downing, on August 30th Ryan was given the additional title of Director of Parks and Facilities. He believes his biggest challenge will be learning the system and getting used to city government.

"I'm very excited to be brought in, first as Rescue Chief, and now also as Parks and Facilities Director. I look forward to taking care of our beautiful parks and our facilities."

Ryan is a native of New London and has a degree in Wildlife and Fisheries Science from Texas A&M University. He originally wanted to be a game warden "but then I figured I'd have to be working while I wanted to be deer hunting." His wife, Ginger, is a special education teacher for Kilgore ISD. Their two children – a son and a daughter – are students at Kilgore High School.

PUBLIC WORKS AND PROJECTS

- Streets and Drainage has new mid-level equipment operator joining the team, his name is Talon Harris
- Higginbotham Rd. and Broadway Blvd. each have culverts that are being looked at by an engineering firm to assist with plans for rehabilitation to failing sections of the infrastructure.
- A few large dead trees in the City's public areas have been cut down by an outside contractor. We will continue to monitor and look for other trees that this year's cold spell may have killed and get them removed before they become a safety issue. Dead trees in City Parks can be reported using the MyKilgore Ap
- We welcomed our new Chief Water Treatment Operator, Kevin Hukill, to the Kilgore water utility family. He has an "A" Water License and brings over 15 years of water treatment experience.
- As of today, our new chief operator, Kevin Hukill, along with his staff, Austin Jordan and Michael Bradley, have successfully recommissioned the surface water plant and are transferring potable water into the storage tanks. While this is not typically a noteworthy achievement, the accomplishment of this small staff should not be minimized. One of the pumps failed during restart and set the staff back 3 days. Kevin and his team persevered and worked through fine tuning the plant and adapting to the chemistry of our raw water in order to get the facility up and running. In addition to Kevin, the Water plant crew has two others: Austin, a Kilgore graduate and star running back in his day, has been with the City for a little over two years. Austin earned his groundwater license during his tenure here, and as he trains under Kevin he will become eligible to test for his surface water license. Michael, also a Kilgore graduate, was hired shortly after Austin. During this tough and arduous process, Michael multitasked plant startup and also studied for and passed the "D" Water license. Michael shows a passion and motivation to do whatever it takes to ensure that the plant is in tip top shape. The efforts of this team should be applauded and we look forward to watching them grow in their careers with the City of Kilgore.

- A concrete sewer pipe collapsed in Hale Street and our crews have successfully implemented a short term repair while plans are made to investigate the full scope of the damage and plan a suitable replacement program. Hale Street at Longview will be closed for the coming months.
- Street crews were able to repair several concrete streets (in this heat) over the last two weeks. They are currently dressing Kilgore St. in front of the new CEFCO, where the developer installed new curb and gutter.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Kilgore Fire Department wants to congratulate Julie Webb for earning her Bachelor's Degree of Applied Art and Science (BAAS) in Fire and Emergency Services Administration with a Concentration in Homeland Security from Teas A&M- San Antonio. She graduated with Summa Cum Laude honors!
- We have two new hires that recently started their career with the Kilgore Fire Department: Firefighter Brandon Simpson and Logan Merrell.
- At the KHS Football game on Friday, Aug 27th, the Firefighters were honored during the third quarter.

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

- Dive-In Movie, Godzilla vs. Kong, closed out the pool season.
- The contractor's code update meetings scheduled for August are wrapping up.
- Murphy USA passed fire inspection and preliminary construction final.
- Twenty-five permits have been issued for the month of August including one commercial remodel and two commercial demolitions.
- We are looking for three Planning and Zoning Board members. If anyone is interested, you can apply [here](#).

LIBRARY

- Story Time has changed since school has begun. Story Time is now held on Tuesdays at 9:30 am and Thursdays at 4:00 pm
- A focus group of library patrons, Friends of the Library, the City Manager and library staff met with architect Bill Hidell on Friday, August 20th for a workshop to discuss ways to reconfigure the current library building for future use and how to make better use of unused space. We hope to see conceptual ideas discussed at our workshop from Hidell & Associates in the near future.

QUALITY OF LIFE/TOURISM

- Main Street will be sending out letters in the coming weeks requesting sponsorship for Downtown Trick or Treat which will be held on October 30th 1pm-3pm. Any commercial business wanting to hand out candy downtown can contact Taylor Owings to for sponsorship information at Taylor.Owings@CityofKilgore.com
- We are still looking for food vendors and seasonal arts and crafts vendors for Oktoberfest. You may contact Taylor Owings for more information.
- Visit Kilgore processed 49 visitor requests this month. These requests are from visitors that have an interest in planning a trip to Kilgore. These requests are facilitated through digital and print marketing with Texas Tourism, Tour Texas, and the Texas Highways & Events Calendar.
- Visit Kilgore is currently working on a marketing campaign with the producers of the Texas Radio Hall of Fame. This affiliated organization and awards event has found a home in Kilgore at the Texas Broadcast Museum.
- The KTBS Channel 3 Community Caravan with Rick Rowe came to Kilgore this week. The caravan started on Monday in Historic Downtown Kilgore and visited many of our unique restaurants, retail stores, museums, BigHead Creek Mountain Bike Trail, and ended on Thursday with lunch at Jack Ryan's Steak and Chophouse. The

community caravan is a popular travel series show that visits and promotes communities around the ArkLaTex area to viewers of Channel 3 KTBS Shreveport via television, website, and social media channels. In the photo below, Rick visits with one of the owners of Jack Ryan's.

