
KEDC accepts award

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Kilgore Economic Development Corporation accepted the 2009 Community Project/Program Impact Award May 14 from Business Retention and Expansion International at its annual conference in Des Moines, Iowa. KEDC was in competition for the award with communities of all sizes from across the country. The 2009 honor is the first time the organization has rewarded a community program for its impact and was awarded to KEDC based on the success of the Freeport Tax Exemption in Kilgore.

Under KEDC's direction the City of Kilgore, Kilgore Independent School District and Kilgore College executed PILOT (payment in lieu of taxes) agreements with nine companies in Kilgore that stipulated cash payments from the companies to the taxing entities in lieu of Freeport Taxes. These agreements were designed to end when the taxing entities' base taxable value grew to offset the first year's total exemption amount. After only one year, the tax base in Kilgore increased thirty percent, allowing the contracts to end and the Freeport Tax Exemption to continue. And with the exemption Orgill, Inc. constructed a 500,000+ SF distribution center in Kilgore's Synergy Park, investing more than \$60 million.

BREI is a professional association for business retention and expansion headquartered in Bismark, ND, and provides leadership resources and education. KEDC has been a member since 2005 and joined to access resources from other successful programs.

One of the longest running and most consistently well-attended of KEDC's programs is our quarterly human resources luncheon. HR managers meet to discuss issues affecting the local workforce and seek to find solutions. Our next meeting in June features a new non-state regulated Worker's Compensation program entitled, "Sensible Solution," an occupation medical plan. Longview Occupational Medical Clinic in Kilgore also will update the group. Reservations are needed by May 29 to attend.