
New ER to benefit business recruitment

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With the promise of an emergency room back in town, industrial prospects are looking good. Availability of emergency medical care is frequently cited as a top factor when companies consider relocation, so this week's announcement that Good Shepherd would open a fulltime emergency room in Kilgore was well received at the Kilgore Economic Development Corporation.

Lisa Denton is assistant director of the KEDC, the entity that recruits industry to the area. The revitalized ER will help in that recruitment effort, she said.

"It really is one of the main things companies ask about – the next thing they ask is 'How far away are you from an emergency room?'" Denton said. "It's a major thing for the companies. It's important to have something in the community that they can get to fast for the safety of the employees and for productivity," Denton said.

One company recruited by KEDC hailed the announcement as good news on Thursday. "They were very excited – they said 'You hope you never need it, but it's good to know it's here if you do,'" Denton recalled.

She said the affiliation with Good Shepherd will be a boon to the site. "I do think it's going to help, having the name of Good Shepherd (attached). They're so well known, and they rank so high among hospitals," she said.

Kilgore Mayor Ronnie Spradlin agreed, and said the city's oil patch location makes an emergency room a important issue. "The dangers of fire and explosions are always in the back of people's minds that live in oil field towns," Spradlin said. "Having an emergency room is important to businesses locating here - knowing that if something bad happens, employees and their loved ones have access to emergency care," he said.

The Kilgore facility brings something to the table for the Good Shepherd system, Spradlin said. "This gives Good Shepherd an overflow and a place to take non-critical emergencies that don't require specialist services," he said, praising individuals like Sherry Bustin, Bill Adamson and Pam DeCeault for their work on getting the deal done.

“No one knows what a hard battle those three people fought getting this done. Those people, behind the scenes, have worked putting this together, overcoming obstacle after obstacle to make the dream a reality,” he said.

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