



TEDC 2025 CEDA APPLICATION

All Applications Must Be Received by August 29, 2025

The 2025 CEDA nominations will be judged in each of the five categories that have made the most significant contribution to economic development in their community and the State of Texas.

AWARD CATEGORIES

The CEDA will be awarded to one community from each of the following five population categories: (as currently marketed). Mark the population category for which you are applying. In addition to CEDA by population, applicants will be considered for five criteria awards such as: Innovativeness, Transferability, Community Commitment & Leverage, Measured Objectives and Secondary Benefits.

- ☐ Population less than 10,000
- ☒ Population 10,001 to 20,000
- ☐ Population 20,001 to 50,000
- ☐ Population 50,001 to 100,000
- ☐ Population 100,001 to 250,000
- ☐ Population 250,001 and above

NOMINATION:

Name of Community: Kilgore, Texas

TEDC Member Name: Lisa Denton (individual member, not organization)

Telephone #: 903.983.3522

Email Address: ldenton@kilgore-edc.com

Community Population (as currently marketed): 15,000

Community/Organization Linked-In Profile: linkedin.com/company/kilgoreedc/

Application Submitted By: Lisa Denton

Email Address: ldenton@kilgore-edc.com

Media Contacts: [optional]

Organization: Kilgore Current Contact Name: James Draper

Email Address: editor@kilgorecurrent.com

Organization: _____ Contact Name: _____

Email Address: _____



THE AIR UP THERE

Camfil's \$97 million development sets new high for global operation, KEDC

When the first group of Camfil employees began working in the company's interim facility in Kilgore, Texas in early 2022, their corporate HR director made a point of pulling in staffers from Kilgore Economic Development Corporation. Shelly Lizyness, Vice President of Human Resources for Camfil USA, was eager to introduce the KEDC team to her new batch of workers, telling the group all about the local economic development organization's involvement in bringing the global air filtration manufacturer to East Texas and of the great things ahead. When she finished, one man spoke up in the crowd, thanking Kilgore EDC personnel for all their efforts: **"I needed this job."**

It was a poignant reminder of why the mission matters. A bit more than two years later, **in September 2024, Camfil Global broke ground** on its permanent facility just down the road. Today, construction is nearing completion on a sprawling 418,000-square-foot air filtration manufacturing plant on 43 acres in the heart of Kilgore's Synergy Park, creating a home for hundreds of new workers and bringing another state-of-the-art greenfield facility to East Texas. Once work is completed in December 2025, followed with move-in by Spring 2026, Camfil USA's new flagship site in Kilgore will boast the company's full range of 5-star products for distribution across North America, becoming Camfil Global's single-largest manufacturing site worldwide and a livelihood for hundreds of men and women and their families in northeast Texas.



With estimated capital investment valued at almost \$100 million, the project represents both the largest capital investment ever for The Camfil Group and the largest capital investment in Kilgore Economic Development Corporation's 35-year history. While the fiscal boon is massive and measurable, the ongoing social impact of KEDC's efforts is front-and-center, spawning in excess of 334 new jobs, including 226 direct positions within five years, spanning roles from production to engineering in a cutting edge, clean air manufacturing facility carefully crafted to ensure Camfil meets the ever-growing demand for high-quality air filtration products across a multitude of industries. It's an exceptional project, with the full-scale effort tracking to Kilgore EDC's beginnings in 1990 and, 10 years later, the development and first shovel-turn on the organization's prime asset, Synergy Park.

Not long before the project's practical timeline began, Camfil experienced catastrophe – the global leader in air filtration production operates manufacturing locations in 30 countries, including in Arkansas, and a tornado destroyed one of two buildings on the Jonesboro campus in March 2020. As plans developed for a new, larger air filtration manufacturing hub in Kilgore, a second tornado in late 2021 wrecked a temporary Camfil facility in Trumann, Arkansas. The storms never dampened the company's ambitions: in Spring 2022, Camfil put down



its first roots in Kilgore, expanding into an initial, temporary space in Synergy Park. Consequently enhancing and expanding the strategy for Kilgore, Camfil’s leaders worked to disaster-proof their operations, ensuring the company could efficiently shift production to East Texas in the event of future challenges. Kilgore quickly proved itself the perfect combination of resources and opportunities. According to Camfil USA President Armando Brunetti, “Kilgore won Camfil’s selection after careful consideration,” he said. “Several compelling factors, including a skilled labor force, strategic location, excellent real estate options, and support from Kilgore’s Economic Development Corporation influenced our decision.”

Initial plans for a \$50 million, 350,000 square-foot facility in East Texas were first re-tooled into a \$59 million capital investment ready to draw on the local 317,000-plus workforce within KEDC’s 12-county laborshed. As Camfil’s strategy evolved again, plans for the building expanded to a footprint of 418,000 square feet in Synergy Park and an anticipated total capital investment of \$97 million in Kilgore and Gregg County.

Key stakeholders, including national, state, and local government officials, business leaders, and community members attended the groundbreaking ceremony in Fall 2024. After about 15 months of construction since that September morning, full move-in is anticipated in the next six months. It marks a major milestone in Camfil’s global expansion while bolstering Kilgore as a manufacturing powerhouse and distribution hub, creating hundreds of new jobs while simultaneously cementing the community as an attractive destination for global businesses.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT

INITIAL

\$50.0M

BUILDINGS + FF&E

FINAL

\$97.0M

BUILDINGS + FF&E

INNOVATIVENESS

Headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden, the Camfil Group has manufacturing plants in 30 countries worldwide. The availability of a strategically-located, shovel-ready space in Synergy Park helped land the company’s seventh U.S. manufacturing center in East Texas.

KEDC’s flagship business park is an investment encompassing 25 years of steady work. After years of planning, groundbreaking, and construction, it officially opened in 2005, and it’s never been left to sit. Synergy Park is an essential piece of Kilgore EDC’s value-proposition and boasts amenities ranging from a walking trail to a fully-stocked lake. The park and its amenities help protect companies’ investments, and it’s simultaneously a valuable tool for employee attraction and retention, ensuring the best and brightest of the area workforce are clustered in the heart of Kilgore’s manufacturing hub.

Synergy Park is a Class-A campus-style installation with almost 1.5 million people within 60 miles. The DFW metro area is also in easy reach via Interstate 20. It’s one of few industrial parks of this level to be found in Texas, a decades-long investment in assets and infrastructure development; Synergy Park is still being refined and primed to stand out in northeast Texas. The entire property and its tenants have been carefully-cultivated across the past two decades, primed for the same caliber of business expansion, retention, and relocation that Camfil is now putting to best use.

Camfil’s site selectors were wow’d by the innovation Kilgore EDC had already put into its principal development. Finding a prime 43-acre tract available for their major expansion, the company also needed a temporary space in the interim. KEDC was able to immediately point the Camfil Group toward a facility that was coming open, ready for the company to put down its first roots in East Texas and get up-and-running on production as soon as possible.

With operations newly-expanded into Synergy Park, Kilgore EDC was ready to assist as Camfil USA’s designs here steadily grew and evolved down the road from the company’s temporary site, building toward the September 2024 groundbreaking. The Camfil project is by no means the first time KEDC has been at-the-ready to facilitate a company’s expansion into a temporary space then into permanent lodging in the same neighborhood.

There are about a dozen investment-ready lots remaining in Synergy Park, ranging from 4 to 70 acres – plenty of space for more milestone projects in years to come. That said, KEDC is already investing a portion of its energy and resources in developing new opportunities for growth while championing the companies and assets already here.

JOB CREATION

334.4

TOTAL JOBS

226.0

DIRECT

108.4

SPIN-OFF

TRANSFERABILITY

While Kilgore EDC's innovative approach in Synergy Park saw the organization preparing for Camfil in concept, if not in name, for decades, the key tools at-hand are common across the state and nationwide for other EDCs. For a simple example, the incentives Camfil qualified for are readily available for any Type A or B organization in the State of Texas: tax abatements, job incentives, and more. Kilgore EDC relied on tried and true methods to bring the necessary stakeholders to the table to land a mutually-beneficial prospect; eventually, Gregg County, Kilgore College, and the City of Kilgore all participated in the tax abatement for Camfil.

Investing resources now in innovative assets like Synergy Park can help any EDC see its efforts come to fruition, immediately in some ways and on a larger scale down the road. By getting sites shovel-ready ahead of prospects' inquiries, EDCs communicate their eagerness to help companies hit the ground running on compressed timelines. Speed-to-market is critical today, and proactive steps saw KEDC remove barriers before Camfil, and other prospects, ever needed them out of the way. Any organization can prepare and develop sites now to win projects later: "If you have a site that has no utilities to it or hasn't been cleared, you more or less have a pasture," Kilgore EDC Executive Director Lisa Denton says. "Maybe you have a forest, but you don't have a site. You don't have a site until they can put a shovel in the ground and prepare for their foundation."

The front-end work Kilgore EDC completed over the years, consistently expanding and preparing Synergy Park, ensured ready-made sites for projects of all sizes, including the 43-acre footprint for Camfil. Having sites primed for a project this size made KEDC a contender for a global operation. It's an extra effort, waiting for the right moment that might be years in the making, but it helped the EDC rise to the top at the key moment.

Similarly, through dedicated, dependable service to every company that reaches out, Kilgore EDC has primed the business community in Synergy Park (and beyond) to help tell the story and bring more prospects to East Texas. KEDC staffers work consistently to find solutions and opportunities for the organization's partners, simply ensuring employers have good things to say about the EDC, community, area and local workforce. In preparing for Camfil's site visits, Kilgore EDC arranged for the company's representatives to engage in one-on-one conversations with existing employers, hearing honest feedback and getting on-the-ground insights about the quality of the local workforce, of the EDC, and of local leadership. Camfil left these interactions confident the company could find the employees it needed here and assured that KEDC's reputation for service was not only high-quality but hard-earned and long-term.

"You don't have a site until they can put a shovel in the ground and prepare for their foundation."

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT & LEVERAGE

In addition to the Kilgore community's longtime support for Kilgore EDC and its development of Synergy Park, Camfil executives saw Kilgore's "Goldilocks" population as a key factor in the company's expansion in East Texas – the manufacturer's leadership specifically noted opportunities and incentives here that likely wouldn't manifest in a larger community.

Likewise, Camfil USA's interactions with Kilgore EDC in the short-term emphasized the long-term opportunities for the company and how it will benefit from a relationship with the local economic development corporation. KEDC's staffers love attracting new businesses and put ample resources toward that goal, but the organization also recognizes it does no good to attract new employers and not retain them in years ahead. It's well-known that business retention is always a top priority for KEDC, and Camfil's C-suite recognized Kilgore EDC's efforts on the company's behalf weren't a one-off. As Shelly Lizyness notes, KEDC assisted the company with everything from setting up job fairs to connecting with local resources for signage and furnishings – for anything and everything the company needed, KEDC staffers were at-hand, preparing behind-the-scenes to help Camfil hit the ground running at its temporary site and paving the way for the \$97 million investment that followed. Per Denton, "It's just what we do."

With more than 5,700 employees on the Camfil roster in 30 countries, company executives praise Kilgore's skilled workforce and its value for sustained growth. From a pool of exceptional talent in a broad laborshed

population of 700,000-plus, the candidates who turned out repeatedly told Camfil recruiters they wanted to learn multiple roles across multiple departments, a versatility that quickly became a huge asset for Camfil USA. “The planned Kilgore facility will serve as a cornerstone in our expansion strategy,” Brunetti said, “enabling us to effectively and efficiently produce and distribute all Camfil 5-Star products to meet the escalating global demand.”

Brunetti also highlighted Kilgore’s central location in Camfil’s calculus – with the community situated on Interstate 20 and in easy reach of major shipping centers and transportation arteries, Camfil joins an array of other KEDC partners reaching customers on all points of the compass.

MEASURED OBJECTIVES

The venture is a high impact project for capital investment and job creation, simultaneously diversifying Kilgore’s economy even further and strengthening the community’s reputation internationally. According to a May 2024 release from Camfil, “The investment of almost \$100 million underscores a commitment to securing our position in the market and fostering sustained growth through 2030. Projections indicate promising outcomes, and we are confident in the viability and potential of this endeavor.”

The Camfil project’s estimated capital investment increased 75 percent between the first iteration and the final, \$97 million in buildings, fixtures, furniture, and equipment. Total incentives valued at \$4.93 million ensure a long-term return on investment. In its substantial fiscal impact to the community, the project is expected to yield \$8.8 million in total benefits to the City of Kilgore, offsetting a bit more than \$3 million in costs for government and utility services. Including a net benefit of \$5.74 million for the City of Kilgore, the taxing entities’ combined benefits total \$18.7 million, including \$8.18 million for Kilgore ISD, \$2.94 million for Gregg County, and an additional \$1.8 million for Kilgore College. Notably, those net benefits increased 70 percent from the first project analysis to the last.

The local social impact is significant. Even as the evolving project saw significant technological enhancement through automation, the expansion of automated production capacity did not have a negative effect on the total jobs number; in fact, despite the inclusion of automated systems, the project is still targeted to generate 334.4 total jobs including the 226 direct positions as well as 108 spin-off jobs.

SECONDARY BENEFITS

Camfil’s a global leader in air quality with a reported \$1.3 billion in sales, spread across dozens of facilities worldwide and closing in on a 6,000-strong employee roster – it’s a boon for Kilgore and East Texas, as is the architecture of the new facility: Camfil’s flagship build in Kilgore has been described as a “masterclass in resilient design,” a practical reaction to the destructive weather events of the recent past. Durability, efficiency, and low-embodied carbon are key elements of the greenfield facility, and Camfil preserved as much tree cover as possible at the Synergy Park site.

The company also has a very cool employee culture. Operating out of its temporary facility in Synergy Park, Camfil USA quickly developed a local reputation for showing employees they’re valued and appreciated in Kilgore – whether it’s a visit by the local sno-cone king or hosting a summer luau for employees, Camfil showed its quality as an employer here. The operation’s ‘state of the company’ town hall (complete with door prizes) proved even more the type of top-tier employer it is and the culture it cultivates among valued workers.

By the time Camfil USA broke ground in September 2024, the company had already met the high bar previously set by Kilgore employers and continues to raise it even further. Local jobs data shows Camfil’s expansion in Kilgore has spurred nearby employers to increase wages for similar manufacturing positions in the wider community. It makes the company the latest high-caliber employer Kilgore Economic Development Corporation has assisted in putting down deep roots in Synergy Park and in Kilgore, providing quality jobs at a quality facility where employees can enjoy their work and their workplace, striving together for production that benefits the community as a whole.

COMBINED BENEFITS

\$18.7M

CITY OF KILGORE

\$5.74M

KILGORE ISD

\$8.18M

GREGG COUNTY

\$2.94M

OTHER

\$1.8M