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2022 Membership Banquet and Business Awards

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For more membership information,
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GATESVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AWARD WINNERS

Gary & R'Lue Gribble named Citizens of the Year

BY JEFF OSBORNE
SENIOR WRITER & EDITOR

The Gatesville Chamber of Commerce recognized Gary and R'Lue Gribble were named Citizens of the Year during the annual Membership Meeting and Awards Banquet at Texas Station.

Pastor Wray Nunn and his daughter Felicia Inman of Grace Assembly Christian Church introduced Citizens of the Year Gary and R'Lue Gribble.

"They work together in perfect harmony and have gone beyond the call of duty to support and better our community," Wray said. "As a pastor in the community, I know they give unselfishly of their time and effort."

Felicia said that R'Lue "has been involved in the Gatesville community for over 40

years and has made a great impact on countless lives as a nurse and mentor." R'Lue works at Hillside Medical Lodge as a licensed professional nurse and assistant nursing director.

Wray said the Gribbles "are some of the most selfless people in love and life with their donation of time and service to the community."

He said Gary's contributions to the community, like his wife's, are also numerous, including building an awning for the rodeo arena and also making that facility more accessible to disabled visitors.

"(The Gribbles) play an integral role in Hometown Angels (providing gifts for local children at Christmas), they have sponsored fireworks and are a dynamite duo," Felicia said.



Lute Sullins, Wray Nunn, R'Lue Gribble, Gary Gribble, Felicia Inman and Barbie Klecka during the Citizen of the Year presentation.

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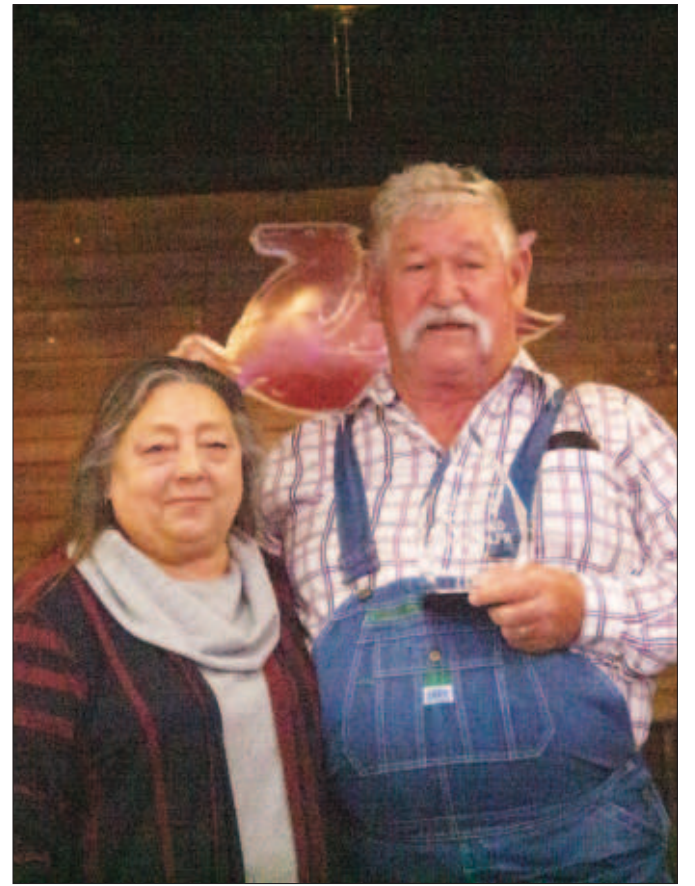


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Lute Sullins, Owner/Broker
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Lute has served on the Gatesville Chamber of Commerce board from 2014-2021, while being an executive board member for the last five years. He is the outgoing president for the Chamber.



TRISTON MCGEHEE | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER
Citizens of the Year R'Lue and Gary Gribble.



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Letter from the 2022 Gatesville Chamber of Commerce President

Welcome to the Gatesville Chamber of Commerce and to our community, one of the best places in Central Texas to live, work and raise a family.

The Gatesville Chamber of Commerce understands that in order to have a strong economic environment you must have a strong community. We are truly blessed in our community to have leaders, business owners, educators and citizens who realize that we all share in the responsibility of creating economic success and happiness within our community.

As we continue to recover from the pandemic,

I am honored to work alongside our dedicated Board who all share the same vision, business growth and healthy community environment goals.

- Barbie Klecka

the Chamber's goal is to work toward improving the local quality of life through volunteers and committees. The Chamber is proud to sponsor events

throughout the year to help support the community.

As the 2022 Chamber President, I am honored to work alongside our dedicated Board who all share the same vision, business growth and healthy community environment goals.

If you are not a member of the Gatesville Chamber of Commerce, please join us today. Your membership will benefit your business and the community. I look forward to working with everyone during my time as president.

- Barbie Klecka, Chamber president



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2022 Gatesville Chamber of Commerce President Barbie Klecka.

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Sara Jo's Haute & Gaudy named Business of the Year

BY SABRINA ANDERSON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

For the last eight years, Sara Jo Poynter has been making her mark across Texas.

What began as an idea to make cheaper and unique clothes from different fabrics soon turned into what local residents now known as Sara Jo's Haute and Gaudy boutique.

Wild. Vibrant. Colorful. These are just some of the words customers use to describe the one-of-a-kind pop-up shop. Among the store's items are bold prints, bleached and distressed materials, graphic tees and accessories for every occasion.

"I wanted to have clothing that people would feel confident in and would also get a compliment from, just to feel good in wearing it," said Poynter.

Before starting up her business, Poynter worked full time as a fitness instructor at various boot camps. However, she knew her passion for fashion would drive her to succeed in operating her own boutique one day.

So, with a few hundred dollars and the utmost determination, Poynter began her journey of sharing her personality and unique style with others.

"It's just kinda something that came natural to me - I like to stand out in a crowd," said Poynter. "I like for my clothing to be a resemblance of who I am - fun, active, energetic."

Today, she has merchandise at two locations, an online website

and a trailer she takes with her across the state to set up for pop-up shops, events and fundraisers.

More often than not, almost every weekend is filled with travel to another city for her, whether it be 45 minutes down the road or several hours away.

"Getting to meet the people, having repeat customers, learning about people's lives...you really do make friends," said Poynter. "It truly is so much fun. I love it."

Poynter also frequently partners with various schools and businesses to plan fundraisers in which she sets up shop for a couple hours. Both employees and the public can shop at these events, usually during lunch time for about three hours. After the fundraiser is over, she gives a portion of the proceeds to the partnered school or business.

"They make my job so fun, and I absolutely love what I do," said Poynter. "Gatesville has been great to me - to just come to a small town and be embraced."

From Central Texas to Oklahoma, and sometimes even Arkansas, she is making all who shop with her into their best version of themselves, or as Sara Jo would say, "In a world full of boutiques, thank you for being haute and gaudy."

You can find Sara Jo's Haute and Gaudy merchandise at local stores such as Baker's Market and 1854 Mercantile in Gatesville, or online at www.hauteandgaudy.com.



2021 Gatesville Chamber of Commerce President Lute Sullins with Sara Jo Poynter, and 2022 Gatesville Chamber of Commerce President Barbie Klecka. Poynter's shop, Sara Jo's Haute & Gaudy, was named Business of the Year.

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Poco Automotive awarded for Best Customer Service

BY SABRINA ANDERSON
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

One of the special features of living in a small town like Gatesville is having the familial essence local businesses bring to the community. No doubt, if you've been down Main Street at least once or twice, you've seen the sign that guides people to Poco Automotive - short for Powell Companies Automotive - a business that's been around for just over 50 years now.

In 1971, Gatesville native Robert Powell opened up the auto mechanic shop with four bays and began the legacy that now stands today.

As the years passed, the business grew with more customers and services, becoming well-known for their integrity. In 1984, Kyle Powell bought the business from his father and continued to give clients the same renowned customer service, adding seven new bays to the shop over the years.

Since 2016, Bobby and Melissa Jenkins have owned and maintained Poco Automotive, upholding the principles of great customer service through their business routines and employees' work ethic.

Before he began his journey in Gatesville, Bobby worked as a technician in the Dallas area and then moved to a Firestone shop in Temple where he eventually met

and became friends with Robert. In 2005, Bobby started working as a technician with Poco Automotive under Kyle's management, inevitably working his way toward his current position.

"I've always enjoyed doing it; I'm always working on something," said Jenkins. "Even when I was a kid, I was always taking stuff apart and putting it back together."

While most businesses across the nation have seen a dip in sales and services in recent years, the pandemic brought the opposite for Poco Automotive. According to Jenkins, 2020 was a record-setting sales year for the business.

"Ten years ago, 80% or better of our customers were from here," said Jenkins. "And now, probably at least 50% of them are new coming through the door."

Poco Automotive offers various services to its customers, most of which include wheel alignments and front end work. Jenkins said the business is constantly trying to make sure they keep up with the market, setting a standard for how to handle diagnostics and electrical work among his employees.

"We have a whole crew of talented individuals, which is very hard to find especially today," said Jenkins.

Staying true to its familial Gatesville roots, Poco Automotive spon-



TRISTON MCGEHEE | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

Poco Automotive was recognized at the Gatesville Chamber of Commerce Banquet for having the Best Customer Service.

sors local sports teams for both city and high school leagues. Once upon a time, the business offered their expertise to local high school students enrolled in the automotive classes.

"Every now and then we'd do a

demonstration, you know, how to change a flat tire, things like that," said Jenkins. "If you find a good mechanic in this town, if he's from here, usually he went through that program in Gatesville."

As Robert planned, Kyle pur-

sued and Bobby continues to enact today, Poco Automotive strives to "take care of people and their cars." For more information about Poco Automotive or for scheduling services, visit www.pocoauto.com.

Message from outgoing Chamber President Lute Sullins

It has truly been an honor to serve as your Chamber president for 2021.

COVID continued to present numerous challenges for us throughout the year but with the help of some amazing volunteers, and the incredible support from our community members, we were able to push through and make this year one of the best ever.

We were able to bring back the Shivaree and Corks and Kegs events this year, and even resurrected the Chamber golf tournament after a multi-year absence. Most importantly, Chamber membership even grew to over 250 members this year!

All of this would not be possible if it wasn't for the generosity of chamber businesses and individual members. Words can-

not express my appreciation for these members - who throughout the year graciously sponsored or donated to chamber events for us, while likely at the same time facing COVID-related income shortfalls and interruptions.

The commitment each of you have shown the chamber during this difficult time is something I will never forget.

Lastly, I would like to thank the executive board and ambassadors for their incredibly hard work throughout the year.

Many people don't understand that the directors and ambassadors are volunteers, and are taking time away from work and family to serve the chamber.

I may be biased, but I strongly believe that I was blessed with the best board and ambassador

group ever. Though short on numbers, we always had plenty of help from these individuals going above and beyond to make each event a success.

I can leave my presidency with full confidence that the chamber is in GREAT hands with this group.

In closing, I would like to make a plea for those of you who may have some interest in volunteering to please come visit with me or any of the Chamber board members.

The chamber is always in need of volunteer help. More volunteer help would open up so many more possibilities for growth for our chamber. Thank you again for your support, and here's to an AMAZING 2022!

- Lute Sullins



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Lute Sullins, 2021 Gatesville Chamber of Commerce president

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The Last Detail named Best New Business

BY SABRINA ANDERSON
Contributing Writer

While stores all across the nation were boarding up their doors at the height of the pandemic in 2020, Monica and Justin Doyle were building up their new business from their garage.

Taking advantage of the newfound time people had on their hands, the Doyles decided to fill the community's need for a car detailing service, juggling both their full-time jobs and their new business.

"I put out the word on Facebook, and it was just our friends and family at first and then word of mouth, and it just kinda grew from there," said Monica Doyle.

As the business continued to grow over the last year, the couple transitioned their services from something on the side to something more full time, finding that the demand for detailing is high in the area.

"This is really a need in our community, and there's definitely a learning curve to the actual ins and outs of running a business," said Doyle. "I think this is something that will add value to our community."

The business is also involved in many community events, sponsoring local city

league teams and donating details to silent auctions in the area. Whenever possible, they like to get involved as much as they can in giving back to their community.

Among the services offered at The Last Detail are both interior and exterior car detailing, which can include power washing, paint correction, waxing or buffing and many more. From sports cars to smart cars, work trucks and mom cars, they have serviced just about every kind of vehicle in the market.

"It absolutely just makes my day when a customer is happy with the service that we provided for them," said Doyle.

Today, both Monica and Justin work exclusively at The Last Detail and now have four full-time employees to help manage the influx of clients' needs. Their next goals are to expand the business to other locations and have their own building to operate the business from.

"We are here to serve the community, and we absolutely would welcome anyone who would want to seek our business."

You can find more information about services The Last Detail offers on their Facebook page or by calling them at 439-340-8107.



TRISTON MCGEHEE | THE GATESVILLE MESSENGER

2021 Gatesville Chamber of Commerce President Lute Sullins (left) and 2022 Gatesville Chamber of Commerce President Barbie Klecka (right) with owners of The Last Detail, which was named Best New Business of the Year.

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2021 Gatesville Chamber of Commerce President Lute Sullins (left) and 2022 Gatesville Chamber of Commerce President Barbie Klecka (right) presenting Abi Cozart with her award for Director of the Year.



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2021 Gatesville Chamber of Commerce President Lute Sullins (left) and Gatesville Chamber of Commerce Director Abi Cozart(right) presenting Nancy Ashcraft with her award for Ambassador of the Year.

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2021 Gatesville Chamber of Commerce President Lute Sullins (left) and 2022 Gatesville Chamber of Commerce President Barbie Klecka (right) presenting Hailey Luensmann with her award for Junior Ambassador of the Year.

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The Gatesville Chamber of Commerce's Top Five Ambassadors of the Year are pictured with 2021 Chamber President Lute Sullins. Those Ambassadors are, left to right, Haley Rutledge, Diana Barnett, Glenda Brown and Nancy Ashcraft along with Director of the Year Abi Cozart. Not pictured is Kaley Branch, who was also named in the top five.

Congratulations to all who were named during this year's banquet.

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