



# SPRINGTOWN

AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Thursday, March 16, 2023

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

## Covered Bridge Venue wins a biggie

JEFF PRINCE  
jeff@azlenews.net

The Covered Bridge Venue in western Springtown that opened for business in 2020 has been named the Chamber of Commerce's Business of the Year.

The hilltop wedding venue is situated amid the picturesque North Texas landscape. Drive through the gate and cross the namesake bridge and you will feel tucked away in the serene privacy of more than 150 acres. Highlights include a 200-foot four-tier cascading walk-through waterfall.

School superintendent Mike Kelley, who served as master of ceremonies at the chamber banquet, thanked Covered Bridge Venue owners Ricky and Chantal Dauenhauer for hosting the event.

Then, Kelley presented the award.



JIM STEVENS | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

Rick Dauenhauer accepted his award with a speech to the banquet, thanking the local community for helping him and his wife establish such a grand event center for the people of Springtown.

PLEASE SEE **BUSINESS** | C7

ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR

## Nonprofit that provides food, resources to people in need named Organization of the Year

MADELYN EDWARDS  
madelyn@azlenews.net

The Golden Girls theme song "Thank you for being a friend" played as the Parker County Center of Hope was named Organization of the Year at the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce's annual awards gala and silent auction.

Parker County Center of Hope has provided resources to families in poverty for 25 years, said Mike Kelley, who presented the award. In 2021, the center collaborated with Texas Health Resources to open a location in Springtown, which has served more than 3,000 families in the city with groceries, hot meals and financial help for



JIM STEVENS | THE SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

SEE **NONPROFIT** | C7 Center of Hope was named Organization of the Year at the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce's annual awards gala and silent auction.

# A shining achievement

## Springtown library director wins Extra Mile Award at Chamber awards gala

**MADELYN EDWARDS**  
madelyn@azlenews.net

Springtown Public Library Director Andie D'Avignon took an opportunity to shine at the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce's annual awards gala by wearing a sparkly black long-sleeved tunic to the event.

"I literally wore this to work," D'Avignon said about her outfit. "I don't get to sparkle very often. I got to take advantage of it."

In a rhetorical sense, D'Avignon may sparkle at her job more often than she thinks.

In honor of her leadership at the library, D'Avignon was awarded the City of Springtown Extra Mile Award at the awards gala on March 3.

"I put my whole heart into what I do," she said after receiving the award.

City Administrator David Miller, who presented the award at the gala, described the Extra Mile Award as for employees who stand out the most during the year and "(go) that extra mile, if you would, to help other employees and be a part of what's going on."

D'Avignon joined the Springtown Public Library staff in November 2013 and was promoted to director in June 2020. Miller said D'Avignon has worked to improve the library's service to its patrons, including looking for new materials, programs and services for the library to provide.

Miller also noted that D'Avignon often helps out at the city's events, such as at the Hop and Shop and Old-Fashioned Christmas.

D'Avignon's smile and personality is a "blessing to her coworkers and her patrons who she values tremendously," Miller said.



JIM STEVENS | THE SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

Springtown Public Library Director Andie D'Avignon breathes in a sigh of relief for not having to make a speech at the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce awards gala. D'Avignon was presented with the City of Springtown Extra Mile Award by City Administrator David Miller.

D'Avignon was feeling a mix of emotions after being given the award - "shocked, amazed, grateful, very honored," she said.

"I consider it an honor for

the entire library," D'Avignon said. "It shows just how much everything we do impacts the community, and that's important to me. It is very important to me having community

outreach with the library."

Her priority for community outreach is evident through the expansion of youth activities, like the teen book club and teen movie gatherings.

D'Avignon attributed the award to the support she gets from her co-workers and library patrons.

"I wouldn't be able to do the things I do without the

support of everyone in the city, both patrons and everyone that works for the city," she said. "They're amazing, including all of the people up at the library with me."

## Springtown Chamber of Commerce Awards

BUSINESS OF THE YEAR: **Covered Bridge Venue**

ORGANIZATION OF THE YEAR: **Parker County Center of Hope**

EXTRA MILE AWARD: **Springtown Public Library Director Andie D'Avignon**

CITY OF SPRINGTOWN'S PUBLIC SAFETY EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR: **Cpl. Victoria Thomas**

JUDY SMERUD SPIRIT OF SPRINGTOWN AWARD: **Andrew Alvis**

SPRINGTOWN CHAMBER MEMBERS OF THE YEAR: **Dene Berry, Bill Hughes**

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# SHS alumna recognized as Public Safety Employee of the Year

**MADELYN EDWARDS**  
madelyn@azlenews.net

The Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce recognized Cpl. Victoria Thomas as the city of Springtown's Public Safety Employee of the Year at the annual awards gala and silent auction on March 3.

This award is voted on by all employees of the Springtown Police Department, Springtown Administrative Services Director Christina Derr said.

Victoria Thomas started her career with the Springtown Police Department as a telecommunications officer in 2017 after she graduated from Springtown High School, City Administrator David Miller said at the chamber gala.

Thomas left the department in 2020 to attend the police academy, and after she

graduated from the academy, she started working at the Hudson Oaks Police Department as a patrol officer, Miller said.

Thomas returned to the Springtown Police Department as a school resource officer in September 2021. Earlier this year, she returned to being a patrol officer and was promoted to corporal in February, Miller said. She currently lives in Springtown with her husband who is also a peace officer.

"Cpl. Thomas is known by her co-workers and the public to be a dedicated officer who is always willing to go above and beyond to provide an excellent level of service to her community," Miller said. "Cpl. Thomas can be relied upon to assist her agency with any need when asked and is an asset to the department and the community as a whole."



Cpl. Victoria Thomas poses for a picture with Springtown City Administrator David Miller at the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce's annual awards gala. Thomas won City of Springtown Public Safety Employee of the Year.

JIM STEVENS | THE SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

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By Local Health Expert Dr. Robert Moss PT, ScD, OCS, FAAOMPT

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CHAMBER MEMBERS OF THE YEAR

# Two local stalwarts tie for award

**JEFF PRINCE**  
jeff@azlenews.net

**KAYLEE PIPPINS**  
azlereporter@azlenews.net

Dene Berry has sold everything from “lipstick to whiskey” and knows plenty about public relations, and Bill Hughes owns and operates a local air conditioning company and impresses people regularly with his strong work ethic.

Say hello to this year’s co-winners of the Chamber Member of the Year.

Chamber banquet host Mike Kelley laughed when recalling how Berry described her lipstick-to-whiskey sales experience.

“That’s a pretty good spectrum,” he said.

Kelley described Berry as a “terrific ambassador for the chamber” and an important board member.

“She has great insight,” he said. “We are very happy that she is a member of the chamber, and we are happy to honor her as one of our chamber members of the year.”

Kelley recalled how Hughes, who services heating



COURTESY PHOTO

PLEASE SEE **MEMBERS** | C5 Dene Berry was named co-recipient of the 2023 Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce Member of the Year Award.


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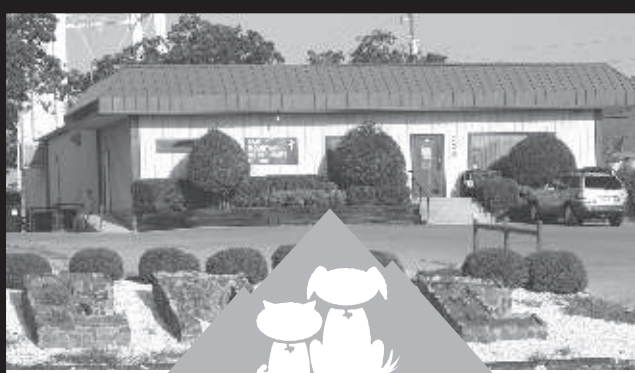
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*"He helps the chamber on a moment's notice, and I was fortunate enough that he helped me on a moment's notice."*

**- MIKE KELLEY**  
Superintendent, Springtown ISD

**MEMBERS**  
FROM PAGE C4

and air conditioning units, saved his hide one summer. Kelley's unit had gone kaput, and he called Hughes' J&E Air Conditioning in Springtown.

"I knew immediately I could count on Bill because I had been involved in the chamber, and I knew about Bill's work ethic and what a stand-up guy he is," Kelley said. "He helps the chamber on a moment's notice, and I was fortunate enough that he helped me on a moment's notice."

Hughes moved to Springtown in 1989 and began working for J&E. He bought the business in 2000 and now employs six people.

Hughes raised his family here with wife Janice Hughes, a retired teacher.

Originally from Oklahoma, Berry moved to Springtown

17 years ago.

"Years ago, when I married Dan Berry, I didn't know a soul" in Springtown, she said. "My sister recently started doing our genealogy. Come to find out, my great-great uncle is buried in Springtown Cemetery, the oldest person ever buried there at 114 years old. So, Springtown, if genealogy and DNA holds true, you've got another 30 or 40 years of me."

Berry has extensive experience in local business. Previously, she worked as the office manager in Dallas and has had real estate licenses in Texas and Colorado. In Springtown, Berry worked with Still Waters Retreat Texas for eight years and is currently working in sales and marketing for RnR Event Center.

Hughes thanked the crowd for "letting me be a part of the chamber and a part of Springtown."



JIM STEVENS | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

At left, Bill Hughes was a co-winner of 2023 Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce Member of the Year.

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# Spirit of Springtown awarded to Andrew Alvis

**KAYLEE PIPPINS**  
azlereporter@azlenews.net

At the 2023 Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce Gala, and following thunderous applause from the audience, Andrew Alvis was honored as the Judy Smerud Spirit of Springtown award recipient on March 3, 2023.

A true hometown Porcupine, Andrew Alvis has lived in Springtown for most of his life. A Springtown High School alum, Alvis lived in Fort Worth for about year before returning to Springtown.

Over the years, Alvis has worked in various positions: buffing and washing cars, loading feed at the feed store, overseeing a warehouse, and

driving a school bus. There is one thing that all these jobs have in common—helping Springtown thrive. Alvis found it most rewarding to serve the people of his community which led him to Legacy Church.

Alvis has served a few churches, but currently serves as Associate Pastor at Legacy Church in Springtown. Alvis and his wife, Kourtlynn, have been with Legacy Church for more than seven years.

Announcer Mike Kelley, who was previously Andrew's principal in Springtown ISD, said, "He is constantly available to help the chamber...he loves his community and is a terrific

example for young people and adults alike."

Alvis currently serves the Springtown Area Chamber of Commerce on the Board of Directors and volunteers at chamber events like luncheons and Wild West Fest.


"There are so many other people that could be in this position," Alvis said after being awarded. "This award to me is not something you win, it is something you earn."

Alvis continued, "My greatest ambition is not to make a name for myself, but to make a difference in the world around me. That's what this (award) means to me that somehow, some way, for someone I have made some sort of difference."



JIM STEVENS | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

Legacy Church Associate Pastor and Chamber Board of Directors member Andrew Alvis was honored as the 2023 Judy Smerud Spirit of Springtown award recipient.



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# BUSINESS

FROM PAGE C1

Covered Bridge Venue opened in 2020 but has "been a plan for longer than that - a dream, for longer than that," he said.

The first event held at the venue was a wedding that Kelley attended.

"It was a terrific wedding," he said. "It's a terrific venue. Great view. You can see Porcupine Stadium from the back. It's a great place."

The venue holds about 400 people.

The Dauenhauers have spent many years in the area, oversee a magnificent event space and earned the award, Kelly said.

"They've shared this facility with the school district, with the chamber, lots of community events," he said. "It's been a great addition to the Springtown community and brought a lot of people out that might not have ever known what was going on west of town."

Chantal Dauenhauer was out of town watching daughter Brinklee play at a volleyball tournament and couldn't attend the award ceremony. Rick Dauenhauer accepted the award and thanked supporters and mentors.

"This is great," he said. "Our family homesteaded here, and I was born and



Rick Dauenhauer, third from right, accepts the Business of the Year Award with friends and supporters.

JEFF PRINCE | SPRINGTOWN EPIGRAPH

raised and grown up here."

He worked in construction and started his first business in Springtown in 1999.

"It's always just been a neighborly, friendly commu-

nity," he said. "It was because of the community that supported me and allowed me to flourish and to grow."

He thanked a long list of locals who helped him and his

wife establish such a grand event center for the people of Springtown.

"It's a pretty building, but without these great people, it couldn't be what it is today,"

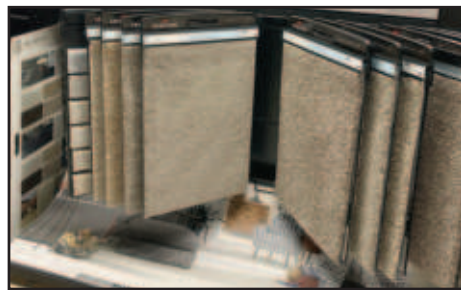
he said. "I want to thank the community for allowing this to be possible. It's my hope and prayer that as our once tiny community grows, we don't lose what is so special

about it that truly impacts lives."

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## NONPROFIT

FROM PAGE C1

utilities as well as medical, dental and counseling needs.

"In Parker County, this organization has been serving for a very long time, and it's made an incredible impact," Kelley said. "Their reach is very significant."

In addition, Springtown residents participated in 250 class sessions and more than 1,400 life coaching and

advising appointments provided by Center of Hope.

"The Center of Hope's vision is to instill hope in the community by exemplifying God's expectations expressed in Micah 6:8, 'to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with your God,'" Kelley said.

Center of Hope Chief Executive Officer Staci Markwardt accepted the award with other staffers at the gala. In her speech, Markwardt recognized

the staff members at the Springtown location, Texas Health resources and the Springtown community.

"Springtown has good people who really want to be the hands and feet of Christ," Markwardt said. "We can't do it without you, so thank you to the churches and the businesses and the donors and our partners and our volunteers who all make this possible."



Dr. Jessica Brace, D.C., C.C.S.P.

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# Springtown Chamber Banquet



Attendees at the Springtown Chamber of Commerce annual banquet stood during the playing of the National Anthem with their hands over their hearts.

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