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Oildorado gets started on Friday

By Doug Keeler
Midway Driller Editor
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Rock Zierman

A celebration delayed is not a celebration denied. After a one-year postponement caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Taft's Oildorado is finally here.

It kicks off Friday with the traditional Civic Luncheon at the Oildorado event headquarters at Fifth and North.

Oildorado President Shannon Miller said volunteers have spent a lot of time cleaning, removing walls and preparing the rear of the huge building for the luncheon and much of Oildorado's bigger events.

The event headquarters also hosts the Oildorado Store and the Oildorado Lounge.

The building was donated to Taft Oildorado by Devinder Singh Bains, who operated a Chevrolet dealership out of the building.

In addition to the Civic Luncheon, it will host almost every major event except for the Oildorado Melodrama, the Queens Pageant, and of course the Oilfield Skills competition and the Grand Parade.

"We're doing all the last minute things to be getting ready for all the events we're holding in the back of the events center," Miller said.

Two years ago, the space hosted the Oildorado Countdown to 2020 event and its been made even larger since then.

Miller said walls have been removed to make even more room, and the event room will seat 450



Carnival is being assembled on Supply Row between Tenth and Sixth Streets. It will be open daily throughout Oildorado.

people at the Civic Luncheon, which starts at noon Friday.

The luncheon is the traditional kickoff to the 10-day celebration.

"We are looking forward to welcoming everybody on Friday to our first official event of Oildorado," Miller said.

California Independent Producers Association Chief Executive Officer Rock Zierman will be the keynote speaker at the luncheon.

Doors open at 11:30 a.m., a welcome from Miller and introductions follow at 12:30 p.m. followed by Zierman's speech.

Afterwards, there will be live music from Soda Crackers.

Later the Taft Lions Club will hold a barbecue at the Fifth Street Plaza from 5 to 9 p.m. with the band American Bred playing from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m..

That same night the Taft Petroleum Club will be hosting a free "Best of Times" 1980s dance from 8 a.m. to midnight.

Many events will continue daily through Oildorado, including a carnival on Supply Row between Sixth and Tenth, a Downtown Dealing Days sale on Center Street, an art show at the West Kern Oil Museum and a student art show at the Taft College Transition to Independent Living Center on the TC campus.

See page A3 for a complete schedule of events for Oildorado.

TC thanks Aera, Chevron for STEM donation

By Doug Keeler
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Taft College said "Thank You" last week to a pair of its biggest supporters who paid for more than \$200,000 in technology for the schools STEM student.

Chevron and Aera together donated \$219,000 to fund upgrades for audio visual equipment for the college while many students were still taking classes online because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

TC Superintendent-President Deb Daniels offered "a heartfelt thank you...thank you for this great gift."

Its a gift that will keep on giving to students for years to come, she said.

"Rarely do you get to impact generations," Daniels said. "But (students) will be more and more prepared the next time, the next time and the next time."

Chevron Public Affairs Manager Patricia Canessa and Aera Vice President of Operations Ted Witt represented their companies.



Photo by Doug Keeler/Midway Driller
Taft College Superintendent-President Dr. Deb Daniels thanks Aera and Chevron for their large donation.

"For Chevron education is a priority," Canessa said. Helping education in a town built on oil is a bonus.



Photo by Doug Keeler/Midway Driller
Chevron's Patty Canessa (third from left) and Aera's Ted Witt (right) tour classroom where students are using technology funded by donations from their companies.

"We're grateful that its in a community that appreciates the rich history that oil brings," she added.

Witt said helping the college and community is important for Aera, too.

"Taft is not only a tremendous supporter of our industry but also a place where many of our employees call home," he said. "When the call came,

we knew this was a great way to help."

After a ceremony in the college quad, the Chevron and Aera representatives toured a classroom where anatomy students were working with the aid of the new technology.



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