

# JCHC JOURNAL

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION VOLUME 2015, ISSUE 4

## CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Members,

Summer is a great time to explore the historic and cultural treasures of our state. The Texas Historical Commission reports our state's \$65 billion tourism industry brings 220 million visitors, the majority of whom come to experience destinations that have retained their historic character. Jefferson County contributes our own unique history and flavor for travelers to enjoy.



Thank you to our members for your time and service in preserving our history.

Theresa Goodness, JCHC Chair

2014 Drillers' Reunion at Spindletop-Gladys City Boomtown Museum

Photo Credit: Paul Prosperie

### VOLUME 2015, ISSUE 4

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### JULY, 2015

#### Special points of interest:

- \* Next Meeting.
- \* Jefferson County Fast Facts
- \* Beaumont Landmark Commission
- \* Courthouse Restoration

## JEFFERSON COUNTY FAST FACTS

**\$1 million**

Cost to build historic Jefferson County Courthouse dedicated in 1931. Local laborers, defined as Jefferson County residents with a poll tax receipt, were given preference in employment on the construction job.

**29**

Number of County Clerks who have served in Jefferson County since 1836. The longest tenure, 43 years, was that of Fred Hill who died in office in 1976.

**9,000**

Number of head of cattle belonging to one of the largest landowners and cattle barons in Jefferson County, Christian Hillebrandt, at the time of his death in 1859.

## COURTHOUSE RESTORATION CONTINUES

The Jefferson County Courthouse restoration is continuing with concurrent projects of replacing the entire HVAC system and installing a new fire sprinkler system. The bulk of the work is occurring at this time on the basement and first floors, and work is expected to be completed on these floors by the end of 2015.



Jefferson County Courthouse basement photos showing exposed original brick and protective coverings on terrazzo floor. Photo Credits: Theresa Goodness

## JCHC MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS IN 2015

July 23, 2015	Noon	Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Ctr., 5055 I-H 10 South, Beaumont, TX
September 24, 2015	Noon	Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Ctr., 5055 I-H 10 South, Beaumont, TX
November 19, 2015	Noon	Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Ctr., 5055 I-H 10 South, Beaumont, TX

### VOLUNTEER HOURS AND MEMBERSHIP

Any work in the preservation or promotion of Jefferson County History may be counted toward your volunteer hours. JCHC meetings and travel time to and from meetings also count as volunteer hours. Members are reminded that at least 50 hours of volunteer work per year is required of each member.

Also with the number of hours, JCHC needs a general description of work performed, for example: 3 Hours – Marker Survey.

If you have any questions, please call the office at 409-835-8701 or contact Linda via email at [histcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us](mailto:histcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us)

### PRESERVATION PARTNERS

- Beaumont Heritage Society
- Beaumont Landmark Commission
- Port Arthur Landmark Commission
- Texas Historical Foundation
- Beaumont Main Street
- Museum of the Gulf Coast

## GRAND OPENING OF HISTORIC FIRST NATIONAL BANK BUILDING

In March, 2015, the Port Arthur Economic Development Corporation celebrated the grand opening of their offices in the beautifully restored historic First National Bank Building in downtown Port Arthur. The three story building dates to 1930 and now houses the Greater Port Arthur Chamber of Commerce in addition to the Port Arthur EDC.

New market tax credits and the Texas Historical Preservation Tax Credit were used to help finance the \$5.4 million restoration which created 30 construction jobs and 20 permanent jobs.

JCHC officers, Linda and Les McMahan were in attendance. The Beaumont Enterprise posted some great photos of the restored interior and exterior of the bank on their website: [Historic First National Bank reopened in Port Arthur](#)



First National Bank Building in Port Arthur, Texas, with city bus passing in front

Photo Credit:

Portal of Texas and Museum of the Gulf Coast

First National Bank Building interior in Port Arthur, Texas

Photo Credit:

Portal of Texas and Port Arthur Public Library



## BEAUMONT MAIN STREET NEWS



Carolyn Howard  
Former Executive Director  
Beaumont Main Street  
Photo Credit: [Beaumont Main Street website](#)

### Executive Director Retires

Beaumont Main Street said goodbye to longtime Executive Director, Carolyn Howard, with a reception on May 21, 2015, at the Broussard Event Center. The event was attended by many Beaumont residents who reminisced about funny stories surrounding Dogtoberfest, Beaumont Main Street's annual fundraiser.

Carolyn's retirement is well earned, as her efforts through Beaumont Street for over twenty years resulted in over 100 million dollars spent in the development of downtown Beaumont since 1992. Prior to coming to Beaumont, she was director of the Main Street programs in El Reno, Oklahoma, and Lewisville, Texas. Post-retirement plans include a move to Dallas to care for her mother.



Carolyn McGuire  
Past President  
Beaumont Main Street  
Photo Credit: [Beaumont Main Street website](#)

### Past-President Remembered

Past President, Carolyn McGuire, passed away on June 17, 2015. Known for her volunteerism and out-going personality, Ms. McGuire was an escrow officer at Texas Regional Title.

Her family and friends, and the Main Street organization remember her efforts to improve our community.

## **BEAUMONT LANDMARK COMMISSION**

Beaumont Landmark Commission meetings are held the second Monday at 3:30 p.m. in Council Chambers, located on the 1st floor of City Hall, 801 Main Street, Beaumont, TX. Meetings are open to the public.

The latest agenda from the June 8, 2015, meeting is posted [here](#).

Ramona Hutchison is JCHC's representative on the commission.

## **PORT ARTHUR LANDMARK COMMISSION**

Port Arthur Landmark Commission meetings are held in Council Chambers, located on the 1st floor of City Hall, Council Chambers, Fifth Floor, 444 Fourth Street, Port Arthur, TX. Meetings are open to the public.

Les McMahan is JCHC's representative on the commission.

## **CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT NEWS**

The Certified Local Government (CLG) committee held its first meeting this year on June 22, 2015, at the Marion and Ed Hughes Public Library in Nederland. On the agenda was a discussion about developing goals for the CLG and potential grant proposals.

In addition to CLG committee members, in attendance at the meeting were members of the Nederland Historical Society, Carol Culp, Bonnie Medina, Sue Franke, Helen Tunnell and Sonya Willis.

After discussion the committee determined an Historic Preservation Plan would be of most benefit to the county, and a Letter of Intent will be drafted for approval by Commissioner's Court to submit to THC for a grant application.

## AREA MUSEUM UPCOMING EVENTS

### Museum of the Gulf Coast

June 6 - August 30, 2015

Marking Time: Voyages to Vietnam

Vietnam War graffiti salvaged from a troop ship.



Museum of the Gulf Coast  
Photo Credit: museumofthegulfcoast.org



Chambers House  
Photo Credit: chambershouse.org

### Heritage Happy Hour

When: Thursday, August 20, 2015,

5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Cost: Free to Beaumont Heritage Society  
Members and \$10 for non-members

### McFaddin Ward House

Designed specifically for locals who have taken our **traditional tour**, our brand new "secret" tours are your chance to see the McFaddin-Ward House like you've never seen it.

Limited to six people, these tours will be announced exactly one month ahead of time. The tours will cost \$10 per person. You'll get a chance to see parts of the house you don't see on regular tour, get a bird's eye view of the grounds, and take a peek behind the curtain, at some places not typically seen by the public. We'll end the tour with some light brunch fare on the porch.

The first secret tour is Saturday, July 11th. It will last from 10 a.m. until about noon. Once you sign up, more details will be sent to you. Sign up today by calling (409) 832-1906, or email [mpowers@mcfaddin-ward.org](mailto:mpowers@mcfaddin-ward.org)



McFaddin Ward House  
Photo Credit: mcfaddin-ward.org

**JEFFERSON  
COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
COMMISSION**

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Linda McMahan, Coordinator



*To preserve and  
promote history within  
the County.*

We're on the web!  
[http://co.jefferson.tx.us/  
Historical\\_Commission/](http://co.jefferson.tx.us/Historical_Commission/)

Wallings Dairy Farm, north  
side of Hwy 365,  
Nederland, TX, in 1944  
Photo Credit: Port Arthur  
Public Library and  
Portal of Texas



Jefferson County Historical Commission  
Executive Board 2015 - 2017  
Chairman, Theresa Goodness  
1st Vice-Chairman, Les McMahan  
2nd Vice-Chairman, Paul Prosperie  
Secretary/Treasurer, Linda McMahan  
Immediate Past Chairman, Ron Ellington

## MUSEUM OF THE GULF COAST

The Museum of the Gulf Coast hosts an extensive collection of historic photos available through the Portal of Texas, such as these depicting the Port Arthur, Texas, Flood of August 16-17, 1915.

