

JCHC JOURNAL

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION VOLUME 2016, ISSUE 1

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Members,

We are living in a world 115 years after the Spindletop oilfield discovery which our ancestors would scarcely recognize. The impact of the development of the oil industry on modern life cannot be overestimated, and our county has been at the forefront of this development since the beginning. How many times has necessity been the mother of invention in developing new technologies in the oil industry, and how many ways have those new technologies impacted other industries? The Spindletop pioneers could not have imagined earning such a place in history, yet they did.



Big Thicket Outlaws Re-enactment at Gladys City Boomtown Museum

Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness

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

VOLUME 2016, ISSUE 1

In this issue:

JCHC Tidbits	2
Courthouse Restoration News	3
Spindletop 115th Anniversary	4
Beaumont Main Street	5

JANUARY, 2016

Special points of interest:

- * Jefferson County Fast Facts
- * Beaumont Landmark Commission
- * Port Arthur Landmark Commission

JEFFERSON COUNTY FAST FACTS

1,139

Number of feet drilled by Al and Curt Hamill, an experienced drilling team from Corsicana, at Spindletop oilfield to discover the Lucas gusher on January 10, 1901.

Nine

Number of days taken to cap the Lucas Gusher which blew a stream of oil 100 feet high, and flowed an estimated 100,000 barrels a day.

50,000

Population of the City of Beaumont soon after the Spindletop oil discovery. The city grew from 10,000 people in 1900.

JCHC TIDBITS

- Jef Russell resigned from the Commission. We wish him the best, and thank him for his service.
- A donation by Bill Cummings to the Jefferson County Historical Commission library of a set of American Heritage History magazines published from 1956 – 1986, was approved by Jefferson County Commissioner’s Court on Monday, January 4, 2016.
- Thank you to everyone for their volunteer hours and reports on their 2015 projects. This information will be included in the 2015 Annual Report to Commissioners Court and THC.
- Linda McMahan is asking that everyone who has JCHC books, etc. checked out to make contact with her.

JCHC MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS IN 2016

January 22, 2016	Noon	Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Ctr., 5055 I-H 10 South, Beaumont, TX
March 16, 2016	Noon	Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Ctr., 5055 I-H 10 South, Beaumont, TX
May 18, 2016	Noon	Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Ctr., 5055 I-H 10 South, Beaumont, TX
July 20, 2016	Noon	Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Ctr., 5055 I-H 10 South, Beaumont, TX
September 14, 2016	Noon	Ben Rogers Regional Visitors Ctr., 5055 I-H 10 South, Beaumont, TX
November 16, 2016	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

PRESERVATION PARTNERS

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

JEFFERSON COUNTY COURTHOUSE RESTORATION NEWS



The Jefferson County Commissioner's Court on December 7, 2015, authorized Change Order No. 1 for Jefferson County Courthouse Mechanical and Safety Upgrades with N & T Construction Company, Inc. for an increase of \$437,000 for carpentry restoration services for the Jefferson County Commissioner's and District Courtrooms. The additional work specified in the change order is to be performed within 150 working days.

Live termites and spiders were found on Tuesday, January 5, 2016. Before work could be continued, pest control was sent to spray. Flooring where the Commissioners and County Judge sit while the Court is in session had to be removed down to the sub-floor. More damage than originally expected has been found.



Jefferson County Commissioner's Courtroom
Termite Damage

Photo Credits: Linda McMahan

SPINDLETOP'S 115TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION AND DRILLERS REUNION



On Saturday, January 9, 2016, Gladys City Boomtown Museum celebrated the 115th anniversary of the Spindletop oil gusher with assistance from the Big Thicket Outlaws re-enactors. JCHC members Mike McGreevy and Don Smart, along with his wife, Darlene Mott-Smart, dressed in period dress and contributed to the fun activities illustrating life in an oilfield boomtown, such as the hoot-out, Fashion Show, and Tea-Time with the Ladies Temperance Union. Also in attendance were JCHC members Steven Lewis, Theresa Goodness and Bruce Hamilton.

Despite of the cold, the event was a great success, culminating in the gusher blowing in at 4:00 p.m.

Big Thicket Outlaws Shoot-out Re-enactment at Gladys City Boomtown Museum (JCHC Member Don Smart is on the ground behind the post.)
Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness



Blacksmith Demonstration
Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness



Drillers Reunion Re-enactment
Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness



Gusher Re-enactment
Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness



BEAUMONT MAIN STREET ANNUAL MEETING



Historic view of the Port of Beaumont with former Jefferson County Courthouse on right.

Photo Credit: Tyrrell Historical Library



Beaumont Main Street 2016 Annual Meeting

Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness



Beaumont Main Street 2016 Annual Meeting, JCHC member, Steven Lewis, in foreground

Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness

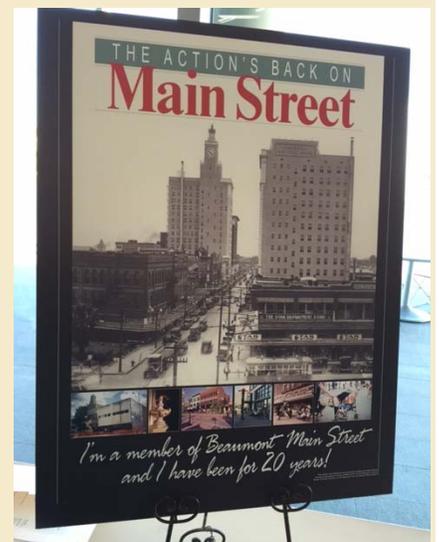
Twenty Year Member Award bestowed on Austin Investments, Better Business Bureau of Southeast Texas, and Burns Properties

Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness

On January 13, 2016, Beaumont Main Street held its annual meeting at the Event Centre in downtown Beaumont. In addition to recognizing members who have supported the preservation of downtown Beaumont for five, ten and twenty years, a special presentation was given by Chris Fisher, Director of the Port of Beaumont, regarding the port's 100 year history and influence on downtown. The presentation included a number of beautiful historic photographs of the port dating back as far as 1915. Several photos featured the Jefferson County Courthouse due to its proximity to the port, and one in particular showed the 1931 courthouse during construction with the scaffolding in place.

The Port of Beaumont has brought significant economic development and jobs to our area over the course of a century, and will continue to do so. According to Chris Fisher, an estimated one billion dollars in expansion and development dollars is planned for the port in the next decade.

Mayor Becky Ames congratulated the Port of Beaumont on celebrating its 100 years of commerce. Also the Mayor briefly described downtown Beaumont projects under discussion by City Council. These projects include relocating the Best Years Center to downtown adjacent to the Event Centre and relocating railroad tracks to allow for Riverfront Park improvements.



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 December 14, 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 fifth floor of City Hall, Council Chambers, Fifth Floor, 444 Fourth Street, Port Arthur, TX. Meetings are open to the public. The latest agenda from the December 17, 2015, meeting is posted [here](#). Les McMahan is JCHC's representative on the commission.

On this agenda was an item to consider a Certificate of Appropriateness for the new construction of a 37 unit, 101 bed, student housing development for Lamar State College- Port Arthur, to be located at 1550 Lakeshore Drive, Port Arthur, TX, situated between the Cark Parker Center and Woodrow Wilson School.

CLG NEWS

On December 7, 2015, Jefferson County Commissioner's Court appointed Sara Bellian as the county's Historic Preservation Officer in accordance with our Certified Local Government (CLG) agreement with the Texas Historical Commission. Additionally Ms. Bellian will serve as the Chair of the CLG Committee for the Jefferson County Historical Commission.

Sara Bellian is a member of JCHC since 2014 and the Curator of the Museum of the Gulf Coast since September of 2013. Previously Ms. Bellian served as the Curator of the Scurry County Museum in Snyder, Texas, and the Curator of Appaloosa Museum and Heritage Center in Moscow, Idaho. She graduated Summa Cum Laude with a Master of Arts in History from the University of Idaho, and a Bachelor of Arts in History from Western State Colorado College.

Already hard at work on project plans for the CLG, Sara will be sharing her ideas with JCHC at our January meeting. We thank Sara for taking on this important responsibility.

AREA MUSEUM UPCOMING EVENTS

Museum of the Gulf Coast

A Triple Middle Passage: The Angels Done Bowed Down

January 30, 2016 - April 1, 2016

Homecoming exhibition for Port Arthur Native, Harvey Johnson, featuring new work by the artist. February 28th a special program is planned which will highlight the accomplishments of African American artists and musicians in the Golden Triangle area.

Credit: [Museum of the Gulf Coast website](#)



Museum of the Gulf Coast
Photo Credit: museumofthegulfcoast.org



Chambers House
Photo Credit: chambershouse.org

The Chambers House Museum

The Beaumont Heritage Society invites you to take a tour of the Chambers House Museum located at 2240 Calder Avenue in Beaumont, Texas. The House is open for tours Tuesday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. Saturday tour hours are from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

Admission fee is \$3.00 for adults, \$2.00 for senior citizens and \$1.00 for students. Groups of 10 or more, please call (409) 832-4010 for reservations.

Credit: [Chambers House Museum website](#)

McFaddin Ward House

Amanda Danning Lecture

January 21, 2016 ,at 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Forensic Artist and Sculptor ,Amanda Danning, returns to Beaumont with tales of the doomed La Salle Expedition into Texas. Her lecture focuses on three skulls found among the remains of early French settlers at Fort St. Louis. The event is being held at the Betty Greenberg Center for the Performing Arts, 4155 Laurel Ave., Beaumont, TX

The event is free and open to everyone.

Credit: [McFaddin-Ward House Museum website](#)



McFaddin Ward House
Photo Credit: mcfaddin-ward.org

**JEFFERSON
COUNTY
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION**

1149 Pearl Street
Third Floor
Beaumont, TX 77701

Tel: 409-835-8701

E-mail:

histcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us
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/)

Pipkin Park Marker for
Jean Baptiste "Jonas"
Chaison, Revolutionary
Soldier
Photo Credit: Theresa
Goodness



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

OLD SPANISH TRAIL

Recently the Beaumont Enterprise ran an article entitled "Old Spanish Trail stands test of time" by Doug Begley and Brandon K. Scott.

According to the Handbook of Texas, the Old Spanish trail was a national highway, completed in the 1920's that ran from St. Augustine, Florida, to San Diego, California. The name was chosen by an organization called Old Spanish Trail Association formed in December, 1915, to promote construction of a southern transcontinental highway.

The highway does not necessarily follow trails previously part of the Old San Antonio Road and sometimes called the Old Spanish Trail, but it may follow the Opelousas Road, an east-west trail through southwestern Louisiana and southeastern Texas.

Map of Old Spanish Trail

Credit: [Handbook of Texas](#)

Photo Credit: www.americanroads.us

