

JEFFERSON COUNTY LINE

2026 Summer Edition



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Summer has arrived and the school year has come to an end! Whether you are visiting family and friends, setting off on a vacation, or simply enjoying the season, the Members of Commissioners' Court would like to wish you a safe and enjoyable summer.



<u>Employee Assistance Program</u> 1-866-451-5465 <u>Deferred Compensation</u> 1-877-677-3678	<u>United Healthcare</u> 1-866-414-1959 <u>Risk Management Department</u> 409-835-8672	<u>Employee Health Department</u> 409-784-5881 <u>County Website</u> jeffersoncountytexas.gov
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2026 CONSTABLE CHRISTOPHER L. BATES SCHOLARSHIP

In 2015, God laid it on the heart of Constable Christopher L. Bates to establish the Constable Christopher L. Bates Scholarship with \$500 of his own money. Through the generous support of the community and annual Scholarship Breakfast, more than \$65,000 in scholarships has been awarded over the past 11 years to deserving students pursuing higher education.



Standing Left to Right: Keinnon Green (Wilson Early College High School, Langston Adams Jr. (Port Neches-Groves High School), Jasmine Sostand (Texas Southern University), and Daniela Aguilar (West Brook High School)

Seated Left to Right: Tori Chance (Wilson Early College High School), O'Mari Scypion (Memorial High School), Eva Oseguera (Nederland High School) Trinity Gilder (King Collegiate Academy), and Denicia Miller (Sabine Pass High School)

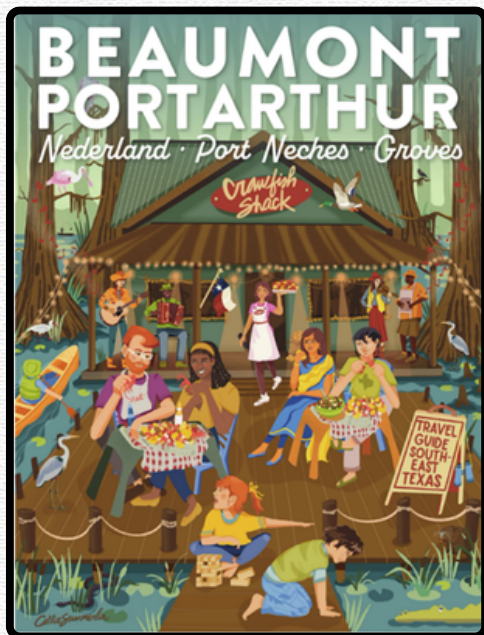
Please join us in congratulating these outstanding young adults and keep them in your prayers as they continue to strive for excellence and pursue their dreams.



What's Happening at 'The Ben'?

We'd like to remind everyone that the Visitors Center summer hours started on Memorial Day & run until Labor Day. We will be open daily from 9 a.m. - 7 p.m. Bring your family by to see our facility & all the local and statewide information we have. Staff can make suggestions on fun things to do throughout the area, including some recommendations of where to go in the state.

When you visit, we recommend you get a new Texas map, State Travel Guide, and the Texas Events magazine which showcases events going on throughout the state.



Recently, some of the Visitors Center staff attended the Indiana Dunes Birding Festival and the Jacksonville Tomato Festival. At these festivals, we promote Jefferson County and all the exciting things to do down here. Lately, visitors are interested in all of the great things to do outside, and summer trips with their families. There has been a lot of interest in local museums, Sea Rim State Park, and Gator Country.

We are attending a few more events this Fall including the Palestine Hot Pepper Festival, Marshall Fire Ant Festival, and the Henderson Syrup Festival. If you're looking for good family-oriented events, you should check them out! For an updated list of events ongoing in the county, remember to check our website!

In May, we celebrated National Travel and Tourism Week and our new regional visitors guide was released. So, stop by our center to pick up your copy if you haven't gotten one yet!

Follow us on social media & check out our website whenever you're looking for things to do in Jefferson County!



Facebook:
Ben J. Rogers Regional Visitors Center



Instagram:
ExploreJeffCoTX



Website:
ExploreJeffersonCountyTX.com

We hope you have a wonderful summer! Safe travels!



Walking & Water Challenge

Employee Health hosted their 2nd Annual Walking & Water Challenge. This year, we started with 15 teams consisting of employees from departments across the county. We finished strong with 8 teams. The goal of this challenge is to promote healthy habits and improve individual health. This goal was definitely achieved! The total distance walked by all teams was 13,081 miles. The total amount of water drank by all participants was 2,104 gallons. The total amount of weight lost was 323.9 pounds.

The winning team was the "Goal Getters2K26", which consisted of Judge Terrence Holmes, Brenda Mosby, Ashley Malbrough, and Glenda Segura. The "Sweat Storm Warriors" team came in second place. Third place went to the "Pound 4 Pound" team. The "Biggest Loser Award" went to contestant Ashley Malbrough. The 1st runner up for individual weight lost was Stacy Granger and 2nd runner up was Arthur Gillespie. The "Best Team Captain Award" went to Sarah Loller with "Sweat Storm Warriors". The winner for the "Most Miles Walked Award" went to Vicky Nguyen-Diep. The 2nd runner up was Judge Terrence Holmes. The winner for the "Most Water Drank Award" went to Tonya Miller. The 2nd runner up for this award was Jennifer Alraji. We would like to congratulate the winners and commend all who participated in this year's challenge!



Hats Off to You!

We would like to congratulate Precinct 2 Commissioner Cary Erickson for being among 21 county officials to successfully complete the Texas Association of Counties (TAC) 254 Leadership Program, a 14-month executive leadership program that develops and equips county officials with the skills needed to effectively serve their communities, with key topics including self-awareness, communication, ethical decision-making, and effective leadership strategies.



Congratulations to Constable Christopher Bates on being honored with the TAC Service Award in recognition for his outstanding service on the Texas Association of Counties (TAC) Board of Directors. This award recognizes dedicated leadership, commitment, and meaningful contributions to the TAC organization and the counties it serves across Texas. Constable Bates was presented the award during Commissioners' Court on May 12, 2026.

Congrats!

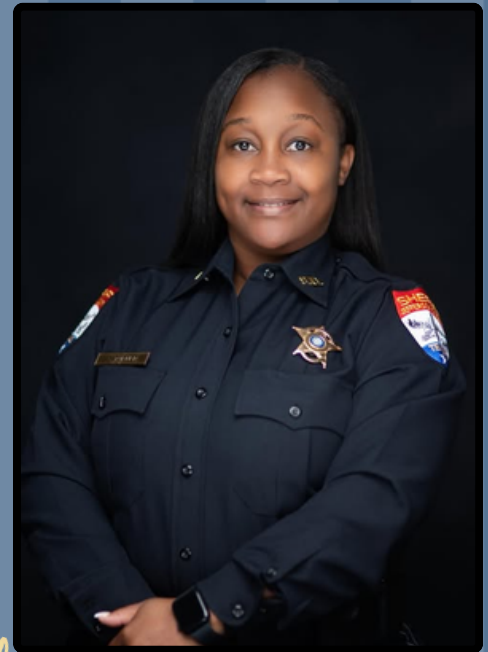
Hats Off to You!



Congratulations to Deputy Barrett Besser on earning his Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice from Lamar University.



Congratulations to Detective Shaleese Turner on earning her Associates degree in Criminal Justice from Lamar Institute of Technology.



Congrats

Congratulations to Chief Deputy Donta Miller on successfully completing the Bill Blackwood Leadership Command College.

The Jefferson County Historical Commission

The Texas Historical Commission awarded the Jefferson County Historical Commission with its Distinguished Service Award for 2025, recognizing the group's exemplary volunteer service with over 4,000 hours of work preserving Jefferson County's historic and cultural sites, buildings, and individuals.

During the past year, the Jefferson County Historical Commission has documented seven historic cemeteries: Blanchette Cemetery, French Family Cemetery, Hillebrandt Cemetery, Nona Cemetery, Martha Mack Cemetery, Sheffield Cemetery, and Murray/Black Pauper Cemetery.

In addition, the Commission has researched, dedicated, or installed Texas Historical markers recognizing the Sprott Hospital, Pandit Mehar Chand, and Patillo v State, each part of the Texas Historical Commission's untold story program. The Jefferson County Historical Commission also installed a National Register of Historic Places marker at the Temple to the Brave.

Jefferson County is home to over 150 historical markers and the Jefferson County Historical Commission is continually researching and documenting its history.

Our offices are on the third floor of the original Jefferson County courthouse. Anyone interested in researching local history in the county can reach out and we will try to help.



Jefferson County Historical Commission Members

Back row (left to right): Don Smart, Bruce Hamilton, Lynn Simon, Linda McMahan, Les McMahan, William Gray, Jay Camp, Kate Hambricht, and Laurie Leister (Coordinator)

Front row (left to right): Steven Lewis, Jennifer Trenbeath, Theresa Goodness (Chair), Paul Prosperie, and Jessie Davis.

Not Pictured: Katherine Leister, Brenda Jackson, Mike McGreevy, Matt Reeves, Linda Duhon-LaCour, and Advisors Gordon Williams and Judy Linsley.

Summer Garden Plants: Okra

Not many vegetables speak to summertime gardens and our Southeast Texas traditions quite like okra does. It is more than a summer staple in our gardens; it is the cornerstone of most summertime gardens. It is the standard by which most other vegetables are judged for summertime hardiness. Okra can be found in just about any local garden.

If you mentioned that okra likes the heat and humidity of our locale, then you would be correct. Okra does extremely well with hot and dry days and can withstand considerable dry periods with minimal inputs as well. Okra planted in the garden will do well from June all the way into the fall season with the first frost being the limiting factor for continued growth. You can stagger your plantings of okra every couple of weeks, two or three times, with initial planting taking place in April and May. The successional planting of Okra seeds will ensure that your plants are always in constant production throughout the summer season. With a staggered planting time frame, you will ensure constant production of young and tender pods that will ensure consistent production for picking purposes. As with any vegetable plant, there are a few insects and diseases to be on the lookout for when growing okra. Insect control on okra may include controlling issues with aphids, caterpillars, spider mites, and stink bugs to prevent damage to fruit that may minimize yields. Aphids and spider mites can be controlled easily with strong water blast to control populations when they are young and lower in populations. When population densities are higher; products such as neem oil or insecticidal soaps can be used for control. Aphids cause damage to plants by sucking sap from leaves causing them to curl and turn yellow. They also secrete sticky substance called "honeydew" than can attract ants. Stinkbugs also cause damage by piercing the pods of okra to pull juices out of the fruit. They leave behind wart like lesions, dark spots, and deformed pods that seem to curl up and are not as desirable or useful when picking. Treatment includes early detection by hand picking insects or using a Pyrethrin based insecticide that is labeled safe for vegetables. These can include Malathion and Bifenthrin based products.

As always, be sure to follow label for directions. Caterpillars can be controlled by simply handpicking when necessary or if severe issues arise, products that target caterpillars specifically can be used such as *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) or other organic insecticides. Disease issues may include powdery mildew or issues with fusarium wilt. Powdery mildew shows up as a white chalky substance on the leaves and may cause leaves to roll up in severe cases. This disease makes its presence known when we have warm and dry weather with cool nights that may result in dew formation. Control includes planting crops as early as possible and washing off plants with overhead irrigation to remove fungus spores from leaves and reduce pressure. A good fungicide may be required when extreme cases of powdery mildew are present. Issues with wilt are fungal related and can be spread through different methods such as poor sanitation, warm temperatures, and cross contamination from other crops. Crop rotation helps to minimize this issue. Symptoms will include leaf wilt and necrotic tissues along the edges of the leaf. Signs of this disease may increase with heavy rainfall and high humidity during growing season. Plant removal may be necessary if cases of wilt are extreme to help prevent spread of the fungal spore to other plants.



Summer Garden Plants: Okra

When growing okra in the home garden, it is best to plant in full sunlight and well drained soils. Soils should be worked to a depth of about 10" in depth for best results. Direct seed planting is usually done with okra seeds. Plant seeds at depth of $\frac{3}{4}$ " to 1" in depth in rows spaced about 3' to 4' apart for good air flow between rows and plants. When plants are 3" to 4" tall, thin plantings in rows to about 18" to 24" between each plant to ensure proper airflow. Fertilizer should be incorporated into soil when working and preparing beds for planting at a rate of 2 pounds of 15-5-10 granular fertilizer or similar per 100 square feet of bed space. As with any vegetable, watering is accomplished best at base of plants when needed. Avoid excessive overhead irrigation if possible. More irrigation may be required in extreme and dry weather conditions for consistent fruiting. Some of the more common varieties for our area will include Clemson Spineless, Green Velvet, Emerald, Cajun Delight, Burgandy, Blondy, Lee, and Zeebest.

Okra will produce large flowers about 60 days after planting. Okra pods will be ready in about 60-70 days. Harvesting okra is best done when pods are 3-4 inches long. If grown for too long, pods will become extra long and may become tough and stringy in texture. Picking will need to be done at least every other day for best results. Okra can be stored in refrigerator for 3 to 5 days and still be usable. Seed collection for next year's crop can be accomplished by allowing some of the pods to become large and allowing them to remain on plant until dry at end of season. Remove from plant and allow to dry and store in cool dry conditions until next season. Be sure to check out our local result demonstrations on several dwarf varieties of okra planted recently. We are super big fans of compact plants that will not become too large and overpower planting areas. We will evaluate for growth, hardiness, and production quantities to help determine the best varieties for our area.

We are always on the lookout for new varieties that do well in our Southeast Texas region.

If you have any summertime gardening questions, please reach out.

David Oates
Texas A&M Agrilife Extension Horticulture -
Jefferson County
David.Oates@ag.tamu.edu
(409) 835-8461



What to know about Freestanding Emergency Rooms (ERs):

1. Freestanding ERs have the word “Emergency” in their name and are not attached or affiliated with a hospital.
2. They may advertise short wait times, big rooms, or the ability to treat common ailments like colds, flu, and pinkeye, but these conditions can usually be treated with a virtual visit (for \$0) or at a convenience care clinic or urgent care clinic for considerably less than a freestanding ER.
3. Freestanding ERs are out-of-network and by law, may bill you for thousands of dollars (known as balance-billing).
4. Freestanding ERs do not have the ability to admit patients to a hospital and will transfer you by ambulance to a hospital ER if needed. If your life is in danger, always dial 911 or go to a hospital ER.

Making Changes?

Other than Annual Enrollment, the only time you can add or drop dependents from your Medical and/or Dental coverage is with a HIPAA **Special Enrollment Event** or IRS Section 125 **Change of Status**. However, you must enroll or change coverage **within 30 days** after the event or change of status and submit the required documentation to prove dependency (marriage license for spouse, birth certificate for children, etc.) and proof of other coverage loss/addition. Examples of Special Enrollment Events and Change of Status are:

- Change in Legal Marital Status
- Change in Number of Dependents due to birth, adoption, or death of a dependent
- Change in Employment Status of employee, spouse, or dependents
- Dependent reaches the age of 26
- Changes in Coverage or Cost for spouse or dependent under another plan
- Eligibility or Loss of Eligibility for Assistance under state Medicaid or Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

All enrollment changes are made through the Employee Navigator Portal website at:

<https://www.employeenavigator.com/>

Injured on the job?

County Policy requires you to notify Risk Management within 24 hours of any on-the-job injury or illness by completing an On the Job Injury/Illness Form located on the Risk Management page of the Jefferson County website



More questions about your Benefits?

The Risk Management page of the County website has detailed information on all the County benefits, along with Quick Links to the MyUHC, Employee Navigator, and Liviniti web portals. You can access the website at:

<https://jeffersoncountytexas.gov/riskman/>



Welcome



We would like to welcome the following new employees to Jefferson County!

Adult Probation: Dallin Broussard, Erlinda Chapa-Bradley, Shalonda Lee, Scarlett Mosqueda

Airport: Andrew Brown, Cace Dale, Taylor Kaminsky

Constable, Pct. 1: Grayson Calcote

County Clerk: Eva Andrews, Maribel Figueroa

District Attorney: Samuel Mazratian, Fred Vernon

Juvenile Probation: April Antwine

Maintenance - Beaumont: Jason Stringer, Matthew Tavares

Sheriff: Shakaron Barnes, Sebastian Goodman, Aniah Hill, Morgen Hodge, Jonathan Mitchell, Semaj Nicholas, Mateyah Powell, Jonathan Pugh, Wendy Sosa, Robert Southwell Jr., Jacob Swartout, Tamika Taylor, Stephen Tucker, Carmela Watson-Fuller

Tax Office: Rosanne Borque, Kristin Diaz, T'Keyah Keller

**REMINDERS FOR
RETIREMENT**

Contact McKenna Bertrand in Human Resources, to schedule your appointment to retire and to receive a list of required documents.

If you do not already have access to your online portal you will need to contact Human Resources for your account number.

(409) 839-2391

We wish all of our retirees continued happiness and success in their future endeavors. Congratulations!

April

Willie “Jane” Briscoe
William Gallier

May

Joseph “Joe” Champ

June

Dennis Boteler
Beverly Pugh
Kendra Watson

Happy Retirement!

Southeast Texas Summer Bucket List

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Watch a movie at Jefferson Theater | ☐ Walk the boardwalk at Cattail Marsh |
| ☐ Visit Gator Country Adventure Park | ☐ Watch for boats at Port Neches Riverfront Park |
| ☐ Take a stroll through the Beaumont Botanical Gardens | ☐ Visit a local farmers market |
| ☐ Explore the Art Museum of Southeast Texas | ☐ Cool off at a pool or splash pad |

GOT PAIN?

**JEFFERSON
COUNTY**
is offering the
**"NCS ON-SITE
WELLNESS PROGRAM"**

Available to **SETGEBP** Members enrolled in the **UHC** Medical Plan and their covered dependents (10+ years). **TOTALLY FREE OF CHARGE.**

IF YOU SUFFER FROM THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF PAIN:



NECK



SHOULDER



BACK



CARPEL TUNNEL



HEADACHES

OR OTHER TYPES OF DISCOMFORT, WE HAVE A PROGRAM JUST FOR YOU.

How it Works

NCS Doctors use an advanced soft tissue treatment called Fascial Distortion Model (FDM) to find and address injuries and relieve pain. Most issues are resolved within 2-3 visits.

Appointments are free to employees, only 15 minutes long, and located on-site.

To schedule your free 15 minute appointment:

1. Go to www.NMCSOnline.com/SETGEBP
2. Select "Create New Account"
3. Complete your medical questionnaire
4. Select "Appointment"
5. Choose a time and follow the prompts.



or scan qr code

Sign Up Now

Need help? Please contact your NCS on-site coordinator.
Additional assistance is available: support@ncshealing.com or (817) 380-4183.

Downtown Annex 215 Franklin Street, Suite 202
Beaumont, TX 77701
Monday and Wednesday
1:00 PM to 5 PM
Risk Management Room in the Annex

Mid County 7933 Viterbo Road, Unit 4
Beaumont, TX 77705
Tuesday and Thursday
8:00 AM to 10:00 AM