

## CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

Dear Members,

May is Preservation Month when we recognize the importance of preserving our historic places and stories in Texas. Preservation Texas and the Texas Historical Commission have event calendars on their sites covering a multitude of events celebrating Texas history and telling stories of our past.

I urge all of our members to take part in these activities whenever possible.

Thank you to all of our members for your time and service.

Theresa Goodness, JCHC Chair



Nation Trust for Historic Places theme for the 2014 Preservation Month campaign

Photo Credit: [http://www.preservationnation.org/assets/photos-images/issues/PreservationMonth\\_2014.jpg](http://www.preservationnation.org/assets/photos-images/issues/PreservationMonth_2014.jpg)

### VOLUME 2014, ISSUE 3

#### In this issue:

Chairman's Letter	<b>1</b>
Community Retirement Home	<b>2</b>
Jack Brooks Regional Airport	<b>3</b>
THC Awards Grant to Jefferson County	<b>4</b>

### MAY, 2014

#### Special points of interest:

- \* Next Meeting.
- \* Volunteer Hours.
- \* Mini-museum
- \* CLG News

## THC NEWS

Many heritage happenings are taking place this month at the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) 20 historic sites across the state. From battle reenactments at historic forts to plantation tours, a meet and greet with

the newest members of the Texas Longhorn herd, or campfire tales beneath the stars, there is something for everyone wanting to learn about Texas history during Preservation Month in May. Visit the THC's heritage

travel website at [TexasTimeTravel.com](http://TexasTimeTravel.com) to make your plans, or search the THC's calendar of events at [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us). For more information on Preservation Month, visit [www.nationaltrust.org](http://www.nationaltrust.org).

## COMMUNITY RETIREMENT HOME MARKER



Community Retirement Home  
Photo Credit: Les McMahan

Community Retirement Home in Port Arthur held a marker dedication ceremony on Thursday, April 24, 2014. The Community Retirement Home dates to 1944 when it was opened on Proctor Street in the former Model Apartment Building. The Board was comprised of members of the Federated Mission Society from several local churches.

The Community Retirement Home is operated as a non-profit, and receives no state or federal funding.

## NEXT JCHC MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS IN 2014

May 15, 2014	Noon	JCHC Conference Room—Third Floor
July 24, 2014	Noon	JCHC Conference Room—Third Floor
September 25, 2014	Noon	JCHC Conference Room—Third Floor
December 11, 2014	Noon	JCHC Conference Room—Third Floor

### VOLUNTEER HOURS

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. (Emeritus members do not have to meet this requirement.)

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  
Landmark Commission  
Texas Historical Foundation  
Friends of Sabine Pass Park  
Beaumont Main Street  
Museum of the Gulf Coast

# HISTORY OF THE JACK BROOKS REGIONAL AIRPORT

Originally named Jefferson County airport, this facility has served area residents since the World War II era. Jefferson County Commissioners purchased land to build the airport in 1941, and its development, which included three runways, a taxiway system and apron facilities, began the following year, with initial construction completed in early 1944. Eastern Airlines conducted the first scheduled flight in March of that year. During the War, the airport also served U.S. Marine Air Corps Dive Bomber Squadron No. 931 as a base for advanced training. Pilot trainees used floating targets in the Gulf of Mexico off Sabine Pass for gunnery and dive-bombing practice.

The airport has accommodated developments in air technology through enhancement of its facilities. Improvements in the 1950s and 1960s included additional land, buildings and taxiways, and installation of runway lighting and an instrument landing system. In the early 1980s, when Texas International, Southwest Airlines, Air Texana and Metro Airlines all operated out of the airport, additional improvements were made, including completion of a new terminal. In 2010, County Commissioners approved a name change for the facility to the Jack Brooks Regional Airport.

As chemical and petrochemical industries, paper and pulp manufacturing and other area businesses grew, the airport became an increasingly important transportation center. In 2005, it was the site of one of the largest civilian airlifts in U.S. History, when the U.S. Military evacuated thousands of local residents with special medical needs during landfall of Hurricane Rita. Today, the airport continues to play a vital economic role in Southeast Texas.

Credit: Jack Brooks Regional Airport website  
<http://flysetx.com/airport-facts/history-of-the-airport/>

Check out an interesting blog about the year [Southwest Airlines flew out of our airport in 1979.](#)



## KUDOSTO AIRPORT

### JEF RUSSELL SAYS FLY LOCAL

“Just booked a trip on American for my mother who is going to visit her sister in Orange County, CA. She's traveling from BPT and her fare is LESS than traveling from Houston on United...\$200 LESS “

## TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION AWARDS JEFFERSON COUNTY A ROUND VIII EMERGENCY GRANT THROUGH ITS TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROGRAM

**DATE:** April 30, 2014

**(Beaumont, Texas)**—The Texas Historical Commission (THC) recently announced that Jefferson County will receive a \$450,000 emergency grant award through its nationally recognized Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. Commissioners awarded matching grants totaling more than \$5 million to 18 Texas communities to help preserve their historic courthouses. The announcement was made at the THC’s quarterly meeting in Fort Worth on April 30.

The communities to receive funds in Round VIII of the program are: Callahan, Dickens, Dimmit, Houston, Hunt, Jefferson, Karnes, Lamar, Lee, Limestone, Lipscomb, Lynn, Polk, Rains, San Saba, Upshur, Wilson and the city of Hidalgo.

The THC requested \$20 million for the Round VIII grant cycle, but was appropriated \$4.2 million by the 83rd Texas Legislature. While the significant reduction is a temporary setback for the 78 counties that currently qualify for additional funding, Round VIII emergency grants will address serious building deficiencies affecting usability, structural problems, and safety issues in historic (more than 50 years old) county courthouses.



Jefferson County  
receives \$450,000  
grant award from  
the Texas  
Historical  
Commission.

The Jefferson County Courthouse, a Moderne style building was constructed in 1931 to the designs of the architectural firm of Stone and Babin. The building served as the center of county government throughout the 20th century. This is Jefferson County’s first grant through the THC’s Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program. The project will address deficiencies in the fire alarm system at the courthouse. This new system will expand coverage throughout all levels of the building and greatly enhance its reliability and reparability, improving safety for the building and its occupants.

The grant application was supported by the Southeast Texas Regional Planning Commission, the Jefferson County Commissioner’s Court, the City of Beaumont, the City of Nederland, and the City of Port Neches. Jefferson County will receive \$450,000 in state funding toward a project estimated to total almost \$1 million. The county selected Bailey Architects of Houston as the project architect.

Future work being considered for the courthouse will focus on the restoration of the historic building, including the installation of modern plumbing, mechanical, electrical and data/communications systems. Jefferson County will remain responsible for the continued care and stewardship of this valuable historic building.

## TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION AWARDS JEFFERSON COUNTY A ROUND VIII EMERGENCY GRANT THROUGH ITS TEXAS HISTORIC COURTHOUSE PRESERVATION PROGRAM CONTINUED

A total of 24 grant applications totaling more than \$18 million in project costs were submitted in Round VIII. Pending additional funding from the Texas Legislature, the THC anticipates continuing the highly successful program with additional rounds of grant opportunities.

“The goal of this program is to assist as many communities as possible,” said THC Architecture Division Director Sharon Fleming. “Applicants receiving grants this round are in imminent danger of experiencing a catastrophic event, such as a fire, electrical hazard, or structural mishap that could cause injury or further endanger the building to the point where it is unusable. The Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program strives to not only preserve our historic courthouses, but make them functioning, safe, and up-to-date facilities.”

In 1998, Texas’ courthouses appeared on the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s list of America’s Most Endangered Historic Places. As a result, the Texas Legislature established the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program, and appropriated funding to preserve and protect them.

In the previous seven rounds of the program, the State of Texas has allocated \$247 million, and counties have provided local matches of approximately \$174 million, to fully restore more than 60 of the state’s historic county courthouses. The result of the successful partnership has been the creation of more than 10,000 jobs and more than \$21 million generated in local taxes.

The Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program’s accomplishments have garnered national and international attention, with honors from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Association for Preservation Technology, the Texas Society of Architects, and the Society of Architectural Historians. In 2008, the program was recognized with a Presidential Award from the White House. The innovative program has also partnered with the Texas Land Title Association for the past seven years to offer a series of stewardship workshops that provide training to ensure the restored structures are maintained, preserved, and do not fall back into disrepair.

For more information, contact the THC’s Architecture Division at 512.463.6094 or visit [www.thc.state.tx.us](http://www.thc.state.tx.us).



*The Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program was established in 1999 by Gov. George W. Bush and the Texas Legislature to restore Texas’ county courthouses to their original splendor and make them safe, functional, and a source of pride for Texas communities. The Texas Historical Commission administers the \$247 million program.*

# BEAUMONT HERITAGE SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING



## You Are Invited to The Beaumont Heritage Society's Member's Social and Annual Membership Meeting

Learn about upcoming events

Please RSVP at 832-4010 or email [gbowmanbhs@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gbowmanbhs@sbcglobal.net)

Please join us for our Member's Social and Annual Meeting on Thursday, May 15, 2014 at 5:30

Join fellow BHS members and board for a beer or a glass of wine and light hor d'oeuvres

Unwind and relax on the quiet grounds of the John Jay French Museum  
3025 French Rd.  
Beaumont, TX 77706

For more information, [www.beaumontheritage.org](http://www.beaumontheritage.org)



John Jay French Museum  
Photo Credit: Theresa Goodness

## POLK COUNTY REGIONAL MEETING

JCHC members were invited to a county historical commission regional meeting at the Polk County Memorial Museum in Livingston, Texas, on April 26, 2014. The meeting included time to tour the museum, log cabin and train, and lunch was followed by a discussion of ideas to celebrate May as Preservation Month. In attendance were Linda and Les McMahan, Bill Cummings, and Paul Prosperie, who took these photos.



CHC Regional Meeting in Polk County  
Photo Credits: Paul Prosperie

## AREA MUSEUM UPCOMING EVENTS

### Museum of the Gulf Coast

#### **The Soul of Vietnam: A Portrait of the North**

Members Opening June 5th, 6:30 - 9pm

Half-Price Public Opening June 7th, 10:00am

TBA - Workshop by photographer Larry D'Atillo

Exhibit Closes: August 3rd



Museum of the Gulf Coast

Photo Credit: museumofthegulfcoast.org



Chambers House

Photo Credit: chambershouse.org

Beaumont Heritage Society - Events

### **Camp Lookinback**

**Session I:** July 15-18, 2014

**Session II:** July 22-25, 2014

**Where:** On the grounds of the historic John French Museum

**Fee:** \$75.00 for Non-Members

\$65.00 for Members of the Beaumont Heritage Society

Camp Lookinback is a fun and educational four day summer camp held on the grounds of the historic John Jay French Museum. Children ages 6-11 experience another time in Texas history while in a safe and enriching environment. Hands-on activities will be conducted each day. Camp Lookinback is fun for both boys and girls!

### McFaddin Ward House

The McFaddins collected a lot over their years spent in the house, including many pieces destined for the two dining areas of the home. If you've visited the museum, you've seen examples of these lavish tablescapes, often set with exquisite pieces of china, silver, cut glass, and others. A new exhibit at the McFaddin-Ward House Museum's Visitor Center is showcasing a few items that brought color and playfulness to these elegant table settings. "Lively Tableware" features food-themed serving pieces from a variety of countries, including Japan, Czechoslovakia, Italy, and the United States.



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/>

---

Historic Downtown  
Beaumont  
Photo Credit: JCHC  
Archives



Jefferson County Historical Commission  
Executive Board 2013 - 2014  
Chairman, Theresa Goodness  
Vice-Chairman, Les McMahan  
Secretary/Treasurer, Paul Prosperie  
Immediate Past Chairman, Ron Ellington

**“WHISPERS OF THE PAST”  
JCHC MINI-MUSEUM  
MAY 2014**

The Jefferson County Historical Commission is sponsoring an exhibit by Bruce Hamilton housed in the Mini Museum. The exhibit, entitled “Whispers of the Past,” contains various pieces of Jefferson County History such as the wooden box which held the launching bottle for “M. V. Cape Faro” used by Mrs. John H. McGregor for the Pennsylvania Shipyards, Beaumont, January 17, 1944; souvenir cup and saucer from the Jefferson County Courthouse; and a small light tan zipper case with “Rita

Ainsworth” stamped in gold.

Thank you, Bruce, for sharing these special pieces of Jefferson County history. If you have a collection you would like to place in the JCHC Mini Museum, please contact Linda (409 835 8701 or [histcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us](mailto:histcomm@co.jefferson.tx.us)) for more information.