



Convention & Visitors Bureau
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BEAUMONT

TEXAS WITH A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA.

History

Chosen by fortune for glory, the world first knew Beaumont through Spindletop, the oil field that proved petroleum could be found in quantities to supply the world. The technology, industry and commerce that followed the petroleum bonanza grew and diversified until today. Traces of those days of great oil wealth remain in Beaumont's abundance of elegant homes, dedication to the performing arts, plethora of museums, eminent hospitals and a university system working in partnership with industry. And just for the fun of it, Beaumont residents at play have the Big Thicket National Preserve, fresh and saltwater lakes, and Texas Gulf Coast beaches within a short distance.

That Wildcatter Spirit

The first visitors to the region were fur trappers from France and Spain in the early 1800s. Beaumont was established in 1835 along the banks of the Neches River, ten years before Texas gained U.S. statehood. The Third Congress of the Republic of Texas chartered Beaumont on Dec. 16, 1838, and the city soon became a lumber, cattle and timber town and the economic center of East Texas.

In 1892, the Gladys City Company was formed to drill for oil on the city's south side. Beaumont became of age Jan. 10, 1901, when the first great oil well in the world – the Anthony F. Lucas Gusher – blew in at Spindletop. At the turn of the century, the population was 8,500. Within 30 days after the discovery of oil at Spindletop, the population exploded to 30,000 people.

Along with discovery came the nation's industrial age and 600 oil companies, including petrochemical giants Guffey Petroleum Co. (Gulf, now Chevron), the Texas Co. (now Texaco/Star Enterprises), Standard Oil (Exxon) and Magnolia Petroleum Co. (Mobil), which has merged into Exxon Mobil. Beaumont grew from a city of 10,000 before the boom to 50,000 by 1903.

Beaumont Today

Today, Beaumont is the region's largest city with a population of 118,000, and the seat of Jefferson County. It is a natural and cultural crossroads rich in history and offering the best of many worlds to visitors. Feature attractions

include Gator Country Adventure Park, Spindletop/Gladys City Boomtown Museum, the McFaddin-Ward House, Downtown Beaumont Museum & Entertainment District, Texas Energy Museum, Lamar University and Tyrrell Park.

Museums & Attractions

Beaumont has more museums per capita than any other city in Texas. Subjects covered include the greatest female athlete, Babe Didrikson Zaharias to firefighting history at the Fire Museum of Texas. (Home of the huge, 24-foot damation spotted fire hydrant!)

- Art Museum of Southeast Texas - Located in downtown Beaumont, the museum provides education, inspiration and creative vision to the people of this culturally diverse region through collections, exhibitions, public programs and outreach in the visual arts. 409-832-3432 www.amset.org
- Babe Didrikson Zaharias Museum & Visitor Center This museum pays tribute to Beaumont's hometown legend, Mildred "Babe" Didrikson Zaharias (1911-1956), the world's greatest woman athlete and Olympic gold medalist. 409-833-4622 <http://www.babedidriksonzaharias.org/>
- Chambers House Museum - Built in 1906 and recently restored to interpret the years between 1920 and 1945, this house has all of the original family furniture and artifacts that tell an intriguing story of a middle-class Beaumont family. 409-832-4010 www.chambershouse.org
- Clifton Steamboat Museum Complex – Pays tribute to military and civilian heroes. Art galleries of the museum feature original bronze sculptures, Native American artists' wildlife and frontier paintings. Art galleries bring to life wars fought in southeast Texas, Louisiana and in the Steamboat era as well as World War I, World War II, Korea and Vietnam. 409-842-3162 www.clifton-steamboatmuseum.com
- Edison Museum Through interactive exhibits and more than 60 artifacts, the Edison Museum interprets the inventions and innovations of Thomas Alva Edison. 409-981-3089 www.edisonmuseum.org
- Fire Museum of Texas - Home of the world's largest fire hydrant, this two-story museum is housed in a working

historic 1927 Central Fire Station, where visitors can explore the history of the fire service and learn fire safety information in the interactive Fire Safety Activity Center. 409-880-3927 www.firemuseumoftexas.org

- John Jay French Museum - An old-fashioned white fence, a sprawling green lawn and venerable oak trees adorned with ivy and vines surround the simple Greek revival-style home, which depicts the 19th-century life in East Texas. The house was built in 1845 by merchant John Jay French as a trading post and tannery. 409-898-0348 www.beaumontheritage.org/french
- McFaddin-Ward House - The magnificent Beaux-Arts Colonial-style home, which was built in 1906 and is on the National Register of Historic Places, transports visitors to another era with a stately central staircase, Tiffany glass, gleaming silver, Persian rugs, period china and crystal. The McFaddin-Ward gardens encompass a city block and bloom seasonally. 409-832-2134 www.mcfaddin-ward.org
- Spindletop/Gladys City Boomtown Museum - The oil discovery in 1901, when the Lucas Gusher blew at Spindletop, ushered in the energy age, giving rise to major petroleum companies. This replica of that boomtown captures the spirit of the Spindletop era with authentically based clapboard buildings and artifacts. 409-880-1750 www.spindletop.org
- Texas Energy Museum - Cinematic robots, depicting three generations of an oil field family, tell the colorful story of the petrochemical industry. Designed to thrill, educate and enlighten all ages, this is the definitive exhibit of the Texas oil industry that traces the impact of the oil discovery in 1901, the present and into the future. 409-833-5100 www.texasenergymuseum.org
- St. Anthony Cathedral Basilica - Known as "The Little Vatican of Texas" because of its awe-inspiring frescoes, stunning mosaics and magnificent stained-glass windows, St. Anthony's was completed in 1907 and designated a basilica in 2006 by Pope Benedict XVI in recognition of its religious glory and historical significance. 409-833-6433 www.stanthonycathedral.org
- Tyrrell Historical Library- Capt. W. C. Tyrrell purchased the First Baptist Church in 1923 and donated the building for library purposes to the City of Beaumont. It is the main genealogical library in Southeast Texas with archives focusing on the region. 409-833-2759 www.beaumontlibrary.org/tyrrell_historical_library
- Downtown's historic Crockett Street Entertainment District is home to five historic buildings that have been restored to host nightclubs, live music and special events with a formal banquet facility, The Neches Room. Crockett Street also regularly offers outdoor concerts, street parties and more.
- The Lamar University Theatre and the Beaumont Community Players offer an abundance of entertainment every year.
- Jerry Nelson's Hill Country is an all-in-one entertainment complex that combines live music and barn dances at the Backyard Music Hall and mouthwatering country cuisine at the Wood Fired Grill.
- Beaumont Civic Center Complex - The complex is available for a concert tour, convention, exhibit show or banquet and includes the Civic Center, Event Centre, Julie Rogers Theatre, Riverfront Park and Beaumont Athletic Complex. Ample parking is available adjacent to the complex. 409-838-3435 www.discoverbeaumont.com
- The Event Centre - Conveniently located just minutes from all points in Beaumont, the city's new event center features a 16,000-square-foot event hall with two 70-inch screen TV monitors and access to DVD players and laptops. Outside, the facility has a 14,000-square-foot roof canopy on the east side overlooking the two-acre lake, and a 3,800-square-foot roof canopy with platform stage on the west side overlooking the 12-acre park.
- Riverfront Park - This spacious park overlooks the Neches River and is available for on-the-water boat shows, weddings, receptions and scenic photo shoots. A miniature amphitheater seats 50, an observation deck and a small covered pavilion. The park has accessible boat docks for pleasure craft and a scenic view of the Neches River.
- Ford Park Event Center - This premier entertainment venue in Southeast Texas is one of the most uniquely flexible convention and sports facilities in the state. The park combines five venues: Ford Arena, Ford Exhibit Hall, Ford Fields, Ford Midway and Ford Pavilion. The exhibit hall has 48,000 square feet of exhibit space and is attached to the arena, offering a combined 83,000 square feet of space. In addition to the park's five venues, Ford Park also has a 121-space RV resort and a baseball academy on property. An on-site regional visitor's center, the Ben J. Rogers Regional Visitors Center, offers expert travel advice for a nine-county region. 409-951-5400 www.fordpark.com

Entertainment

- The renovated 1927 Jefferson Theatre, with its 18-foot diameter chandelier that replicates those found in the Palace of Versailles, offers live performances attracting many well-known entertainers. In 1946, this historic theater hosted the premiere of "It's A Wonderful Life," with star James Stewart and director Frank Capra in attendance. Now, the theatre hosts concerts,
- The Julie Rogers Theatre, renovated in 2007, is home to theatrical presentations, operas, the Symphony of Southeast Texas, Beaumont Civic Ballet and traveling shows.

Legends Made Here

Many famous people have called Beaumont their hometown. Such legends include J. P. Richardson (The Big Bopper), Janis Joplin, artist Robert Rauschenberg and country music stars Mark Chesnutt and Clay Walker. The region is the birthplace of music legends George Jones, J.P. Richardson and Tracy Byrd, as well as the world's greatest female athlete, Babe Didrikson Zaharias.

A Natural Attraction

Outdoor lovers seek the natural pleasures of internationally renowned Big Thicket National Preserve along with Village Creek State Park, a hotspot for canoeing, fishing and birding. Cattail Marsh, Pleasure Island, Sea Rim State Park and High Island are home to countless bird species and wildlife. Visitors worldwide who are interested in birding, fishing or crabbing flock to the area year-round. Boating, hunting, swimming and various outdoor activities provide year-round entertainment for guests and locals.

- Big Thicket National Preserve- Just north of Beaumont is one of the most diverse biospheres that has made the city a jumping-off place for nature tours, birding, kayaking, canoeing and hiking. The preserve consists of nine land units and six water corridors encompassing more than 97,000 acres. It was the first preserve in the National Park System and protects an area of rich biological diversity. The visitor's center offers interactive exhibits about the natural and cultural history of the Big Thicket region. 409-951-6700 www.nps.gov/bith
- Neches River Adventures- Spend the afternoon on board The Ivory Bill for a beautiful Neches River boat tour departing from Riverfront Park in downtown Beaumont. 409-651-5326 www.nechesriveradventures.org
- Beaumont Botanical Gardens and Warren Loose Conservatory- The second largest conservatory in Texas, the gardens include a Horticulture Center, Native Plant Center, Japanese garden, modern rose garden and 9/11 Memorial Garden. 409-842-3135 www.beaumontbotanicalgardens.com
- Cattail Marsh – This recreational haven includes 900 acres of wetlands and offers a variety of activities, with a newly opened boardwalk and more than eight miles of gravel levee roads for jogging, hiking, biking, horseback riding, bird watching, wildlife photography and picnicking along the banks of Hildebrandt Bayou and Willow Marsh Bayou. Cattail Marsh is a wildlife refuge for a variety of aquatic mammals and more than 350 species of birds annually, including pelicans, egrets, roseate spoonbills, ducks, ibis, doves and red-winged blackbirds. Originally constructed in 1993 by the Beaumont Public Utilities Department as the final phase of Beaumont's wastewater treatment system, this natural and innovative process has attracted the interest of birders, environmentalists and wildlife professionals nationally.
- Gator Country Adventure Park- Built on the remnants of an abandoned alligator-breeding farm, Gator Country was constructed and founded by co-owner Gary Saurage and his partners in March 2006, creating one of the most unique attractions to Beaumont's bayou area. When Saurage first found the remnants of the old alligator farm, the grounds were so dry and decrepit that very few alligators survived. Now, more than 300 alligators thrive in the three ponds at Gator Country, creating a perfect, safe place for viewing the creatures in their natural habitats, ensuring both an entertaining and educational experience. 409-794-9453 www.gatorrescue.com

Cuisine

Beaumont and the Southeast Texas region are famous for eclectic cuisine. Bordered by Louisiana, Beaumont enjoys Cajun influences mixed with tasty Tex Mex and savory Southeast Texas tradition. Local favorites include barbecue crabs, boudain, crawfish, seafood gumbo, dock fresh Gulf seafood, legendary pork sandwiches, smoked barbecue brisket and much more.

Location

Because Beaumont is a hub city, visitors can arrive via highway, air, rail or even water. Beaumont is conveniently located on Interstate 10, just 90 miles from Houston, 280 miles from San Antonio, 25 miles from the Louisiana border, 260 miles from New Orleans and approximately 35 miles north of the Gulf of Mexico. American Eagle Airlines serves the Jack Brooks Regional Airport (BPT), with worldwide connections available through Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW). For train transportation, Beaumont is on the Sunset Limited Amtrak line that travels from New Orleans to Los Angeles.

Miles to Beaumont:

Houston	90
Louisiana Border	25
Shreveport, LA	210
Austin, TX	248
New Orleans, LA	260
San Antonio, TX	280
Corpus Christi, TX	307
Dallas, TX	325
El Paso, TX	832

Time Zone: Central Standard Time (Daylight Savings observed)

Elevation: 25 feet above sea level

Climate (Averages):

- Coldest month, January (52.5 F / 11 C)

- Hottest month, July (82 F / 28 C)

- Mean annual temperature (72 F / 22 C)

- Annual rainfall, 57 inches

Industries & Agriculture

Located along the banks of the Neches River, the area is a natural resource basin producing oil, gas and salt. A healthy agricultural economy includes rice, soybean, blueberries, crawfish, wheat, grain sorghum and livestock. In addition to having one of the world's largest refining and petrochemical complexes, The Port of Beaumont ranks No. 4 in the United States in total ship tonnage handled. Other industries include shipyards, lumber, pulp and paper mills, and rice mills. Beaumont has also become a source of sophisticated medical instruments and precision industrial equipment.

Sports and Recreation

The city's mild climate provides a number of wonderful outdoor activities year-round. From birding, paddling and camping to fishing, biking and golf, recreational and sports opportunities abound around Beaumont.



Beaumont

