

## Revitalization and Restoration of Neighborhoods –

# “ONE BLOCK AT A TIME”



“If not now, when? If not us, then who?” These questions, in various forms, have been posed by philosophers and elected officials for centuries. Now, Mayor Deloris “Bobbie” Prince asks the same questions and provides a clear, unwavering, answer – “The time is now! We will lead the charge!”

The Mayor and City Council of Port Arthur have launched an aggressive program to revitalize and restore the city’s neighborhoods utilizing the “One Block At A Time” initiative. Although, the program has been in the planning and development stages for several months, it was officially unveiled at a program “roll out” meeting held at DeQueen



Mayor Deloris “Bobbie” Prince  
Photo taken by OTRA Hispanic Media

Elementary School, which is located in the program’s pilot area.

The “One Block At A Time” Program is designed to include all segments of the community. It establishes a platform for partnerships and networking in the city to begin. It sets in motion the task of revitalizing and restoring the city’s neighborhoods and the cleaning up of unattractive areas of the city. It focuses on increased code enforcement, neighborhood stabilization and crime fighting.

The program uses a multi-faceted approach to address what the Mayor and City Council view as a dire need of the city. It anticipates involvement of all segments of the city. It crosses all socio-economic, ethnic and geographic lines. The program’s goal is to enhance civic pride and restore the city’s aesthetic beauty.

There are several key components which are designed to undergird the program’s success. One pillar of the program’s foundation is the role of the City in facilitating the success of its partners. Key to the success of this initiative is the commitment / appropriation of fiscal and human resources. At its January 13, 2009 City Council meeting, the City Council unanimously voted a budget amendment which provided \$260,000 to fund the “One Block At A Time” Program. The funding covers program costs for approximately nine (9) months and includes: advertising, communication, office supplies, software, surveillance cameras, educational programs, and extra help.



Additionally, the program has been funded to provide \$50,000 in overtime primarily for Public Works to allow them to increase efforts in trash collection, \$25,000 to provide a vehicle for the program to increase visibility and assist staff in carrying out program tasks, \$20,000 for graffiti removal equipment, and \$5,000 for temporary help. As further evidence of the City’s planning and commitment, \$40,000 has been allocated as salary for a Neighborhood Development Specialist position in the Planning and Community Development Department.

This individual will be responsible for a broad range of administrative and coordinating duties, including meeting with individuals and neighborhood groups, coordinating efforts between City departments to address concerns and issues, facilitating neighborhood beautification and restoration projects, assisting in grant applications to secure funds to support program goals, and creating/maintaining files and databases to provide reports on program activities.

The budget amendment also provided funding for items for departments which will directly support program goals. This funding included: \$170,000 to provide an additional four (4) employee crew in the Drainage Division of Public Works to assist in drainage maintenance activities, \$500,000 to provide two (2) replacement residential garbage trucks and \$175,000 for one (1) replacement trash collection unit in the Solid Waste Division of Public Works.

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The city's aesthetic appearance has taken a beating due to several severe storms in succession [Hurricane Rita, Hurricane Humberto, Hurricane Ike], which means the city has been mostly in recovery mode for the past several years. The city's appearance has also taken a beating due to citizens violating City codes regarding high grass, weeds, litter, junk motor vehicles and dilapidated structures.

The "One Block At A Time" Program takes aim at the problems created by the referenced circumstances. Area 1, the pilot area for the program, has the following boundaries: north - Thomas Blvd; south - Lakeshore Drive; east - Memorial Blvd.; west - Dequeen Blvd. It includes DeQueen Blvd. in its entirety. City forces from several departments were concentrated in this area to address numerous problems. The employees worked on clearing/cleaning curbs and gutters on city right-of-ways and streets, removing large trees and trash on city right-of-ways and streets, and identifying dilapidated structures for the City's demolition program.



A key element of the program is the commitment by the City to "raise its level of performance. Citizens attending the program's "roll out" meeting, leveled criticism at the City for the quality of work being performed by some employees in various departments. Critical remarks were made regarding the City's appearance of laxity with regard to code enforcement. Although the task is somewhat daunting, Lawrence Baker, Director of Building and Inspection Services, and his staff, have increased their efforts with regard to citing violators and eliminating code violations.

One section of the code which has been somewhat confusing to citizens is the law regarding parking of vehicles in front yards. The ordinance is not a new one, but is being enforced more vigorously. Citizens should know that it is NOT the intent of the City for individuals to remove gravel or shell driveways. However, the City does want to discourage individuals from parking on front lawns and sidewalks. Currently, the City is endeavoring to educate citizens regarding the ordinance, and will be doing a mass mailing regarding key City ordinances.

The City encourages citizens with information regarding potential violations in regards to illegal dumping, and other illegal code violations to contact the Building and Inspection Services Department at 409-983-8274. The department is actively working to change the city through control and elimination of code violations.

Another concern voiced during the program's "roll out" meeting was regarding law enforcement.



Citizens were concerned that it appeared that law enforcement officers were ignoring violations in certain neighborhoods. Mark Blanton, Chief of Police, has indicated he understands the concerns of citizens and supports their desire for change. Although the department has made strides in reducing crime, the need for officers to take on "extra duty" jobs relative to the petro-chemical expansion, increased surveillance activities relative to the terrorist threat, and to deal with emergency management functions have placed a strain on his force. During the last City Council meeting the City Council added an additional three (3) police officer positions.



The Public Works Department has faced mountains – literally – of debris as a direct result of the various storms and the aftermath as citizens and business endeavor to restore their structures. Each storm has required an exhaustive schedule for personnel and equipment in an effort to keep pace with the debris. The Department, led by John Comeaux, P. E. and Ross Blackketter, P. E., faces challenges on several fronts when it comes to maintaining the aesthetic outlook of the city. In addition to having to deal with commercial and green debris, the department must also attempt to keep ditches clean as they are a key part of the city's overall drainage system. Through the "One Block At A Time" Program, the department will be provided with additional equipment and personnel which will increase its ability to respond to needs of our citizens.



The City Council has set as one of its primary goals improving "quality of life" for citizens and visitors. As part of the "One Block At A Time" Program, the Parks and Recreation Department is actively engaged in attempting to improve the state of city parks and the appearance of city right-of-ways.

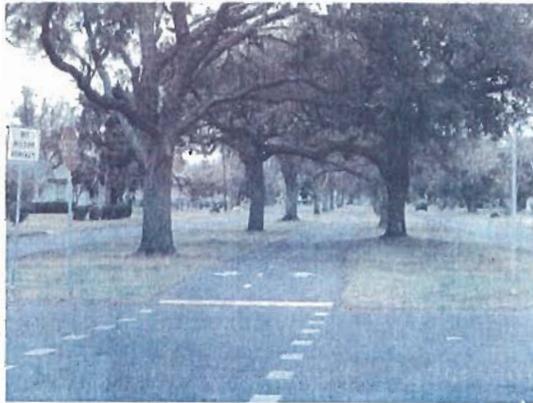


Dr. Albert T Thigpen, Interim Director of Parks and Recreation, points to the placing of new Playscape Systems, other new park equipment, and clearing of curbs as indicators that departmental staff are internalizing the department's "excellence" motto. The goal is to make the parks an enjoyable experience for persons of all ages and to make the City's right-of-ways and thoroughfares a source of city pride.



The "One Block At A Time" Program not only focuses on the cleaning and clearing of neighborhoods, but also on their restoration and stabilization. The City's Planning and Community Development Department with Ms. Colleen Russell as Director, and Ron Burton as Assistant Director, will play a pivotal role in the efforts to restore and stabilize neighborhoods. The Department will continue programs to build and renovate homes and will assist in efforts of other entities, such as the Port Arthur Housing Authority, Project SETIO/CWRC, Homes for Habitat, local Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs), private developers, etc.

The City, as part of the "One Block At A Time" program is preparing to either launch, or expand, several programs which will directly impact neighborhood restoration and stabilization. "Urban Land Banking", a program created under state law, allows a city to gather several pieces of property together for entities such as those mentioned previously to develop for new housing. The program accrues several advantages including: properties previously off the tax roll are returned thereto, properties which previously have been maintained at City (taxpayer) expense are maintained by owners, neighborhood property values are increased due to the placing of new structures, and neighborhood pride is increased as the neighborhood gains a more positive appearance.



The program's advantage to developers and others is the fact that the property can be acquired at minimal cost and often free of liens. The City works with the appropriate agencies to acquire property, establish ownership, and put together a program for proper transfer of the property to the acquiring entity. The net result of such a program is an increase in available housing stock, increase in property values and tax revenue.



Photo taken by OTRA Hispanic Media

The other pillar of the program's foundation is the involvement of citizens at the neighborhood level. As Mayor Prince has stated, "...the program cannot work without the volunteering and participation of everyone in the neighborhoods." In order for the program to be effective, it must truly function at the "people" level. People must decide that they want a better surrounding, a better environment, a better quality of life - and then act to make it happen. If each person will work to make their area better, then each neighborhood act to make itself better, then eventually we will have the city we long for.



Photo taken by OTRA Hispanic Media

The Mayor and City Council are excited about the high level of support the community has shown for the program. The large turn out at the program's formal launch, the high volume of calls received by the Mayor's office, and the high level of volunteerism is a clear sign that the community stands behind the program.

It is with a profound sense of duty and need, we set out to accomplish this objective, for we cannot afford to fail in this endeavor. Your Mayor and City Council are committed to this program, please join us in this effort.

**Conclusion**

The Mayor and City Council of Port Arthur plan to aggressively pursue the restoration and revitalization of neighborhoods by:

- Restoring a mindset of civic and neighborhood pride
- Effective code enforcement
- High standards of municipal performance
- Partnerships with other government entities
- Fostering an environment conducive to housing replacement and restoration
- Aiding citizens and neighborhoods in their efforts by linking people, finances, and resources to the goal

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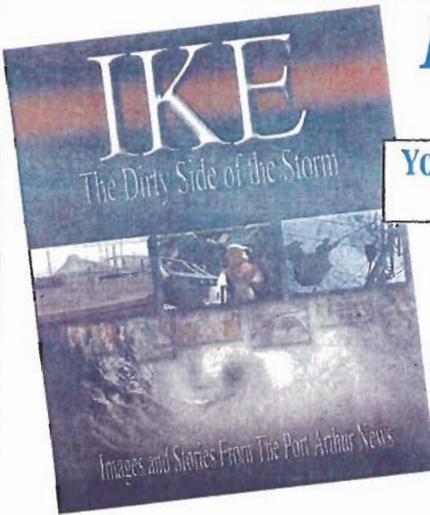
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The Port Arthur News has put together a book describing in photos and stories the devastation of Hurricane Ike— the most costly hurricane in history. Books may now be purchased at the low price of \$19.95 tax included. *Don't miss your opportunity.*




# Mayor wants city cleaned one block at a time

By Sherry Koonce  
The News staff writer

Port Arthur Mayor Deloris "Bobbie" Prince is ready to get her hands dirty.

She's taking steps to rid the city of unwanted blight, while urging city volunteers to embrace the project that she says will not only beautify the city, but will also instill a sense of pride.

Prince said many areas of Port Arthur need to be cleaned, not only to attract new residents, but to make those who already live here happy that they do.

"I love Port Arthur, and as I ride around and see how things have got in our

**WHAT:** One Block at a Time city-wide clean-up campaign

**WHEN:** Right now

**WHERE:** From residents' yards to city streets, beginning with DeQueen Boulevard area

**WHY:** City has become eyesore

**NEEDED:** Volunteers. Call Mayor's office at 409-548-2239 to help.

city, I am dismayed. It's time we take complete control of bringing our city up to the standards we know it can become," Prince said.

The mayor intends to accomplish the task one

block at a time, and with the help of city staff, individuals, organizations, church groups, just about anyone who wants to roll up their sleeves and help beautify the city.

Called the "One Block at a Time" program, Prince said she was taking on the effort as her pet project, but hoped the entire city would embrace the cleanup campaign.

City staff has already begun the campaign, said Albert Thigpen, interim director of the city's Parks and Recreation Department.

The city is in the process of developing a comprehensive plan to address

See 'Blight,' page A2



Mary Meaurio/The News

Port Arthur is embarking on a campaign to clean up the city. Properties such as this one at Sixth Street a block off DeQueen Boulevard are targets of the program. Mayor Deloris "Bobbie" Prince is enlisting the help of volunteers to help rid the city of eyesores.

## Blight

Continued from A1

the best approach for ridding Port Arthur of any items detracting from its appearance.

Already, city staff has performed some weeding and curb care in city parks, and debris removal has been ongoing.

The Community Development Department is looking at code violations such as junk motor vehicles, trash and debris on property, etc.

Target areas are being identified, while the services of volunteers are sought. Anyone who would like to volunteer should call the Mayor's office at (409)983-8105. Anyone is welcome, regardless of age.

Thigpen said DeQueen Boulevard, bounded by Thomas and Memorial/Woodworth Boulevards and Lakeshore Drive, has been designated as Area 1. The area will serve as the pilot area for the fledgling program. Cleanup efforts should begin as soon as volunteers are ready to start.

Laurence Baker, director of inspections and code enforcement said the city started enforcing its parking ordinance Friday.

Though long on the books, the ordinance has not diligently been enforced,

Baker said. According to the ordinance, vehicles should not be parked in driveways, not yards. If a home has too many cars to park in the drive, the overflow should

be parked adjacent to the curb in the roadway.

Residents should be all-weather surfaces, such as shell, brick, rock, asphalt or concrete. Dirt drives are prohibited.

Baker's office is also looking for illegal signs that advertise businesses, computer classes, language courses such as "Speak Spanish in a Weekend," those type signs.

Signs should not be posted on telephone poles either, including garage sale notices.

Violators of either ordinance could be fined up to \$2,000 for the misdemeanor infraction.

Baker said the city planned to work with violators on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration roads that are too narrow. Residents with standard driveways will be given ample time to bring them up to city standards.

Prince urged city residents to start the program right now, at their own homes.

"It is time to reclaim our city, and I believe it is incumbent that we all take the responsibility, starting with our own yards, and then branching out to other areas," Prince said. "I'm willing to get in there and get my hands dirty; I am asking others to volunteer to do the same."

skoonce@panews.com

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2008



The News  
Thursday, January 8, 2009

Editor

In Our 111th Year

# The News

Roger Underwood  
publisher

Roger Cowles  
editor

## LETTERS

### Mayor has good idea to clean up Port Arthur

Mayor Deloris "Bobbie" Prince has a great idea to "clean up the city."

At one time we were known as the "all American city" and maybe we can gain that title again.

I do not know if she have ever been to Canada but it is super clean. The reason is if a person is caught throwing out trash, they are fined \$2,000.

Drive down 365 by our shop or any highway where fast food places are located and you will see a large amount of trash. It takes me about one hour to cut the grass and two hours to pick up trash on the highway before I cut.

Maybe the police can start giving tickets to folks who throw out thrash as this would be a good place to start. If they are aware they will be fined, maybe they will not throw out the trash along the highway or when they are at a stop light.

When people drive into Port Arthur, they see a lot of trash on the highways.

Again, I think the "clean up Port Arthur" is a great idea.

*Jerry McInnis  
Port Arthur*

### Movie reminder of good German people

Over forty five years ago I was stationed with the U.S. Army in the town of Butzbach, Germany, a short distance from Frankfurt. During this two-year assignment I came to know a small number wonderful German people in Butzbach and the surrounding countryside. I also came to know a family in the town of Herborn. My association with these folks gave me a great respect and affection for Germany and its people. I came to understand that not all Germans were affiliated with Adolph Hitler's Third Reich.

On the day after Christmas of this year, my wife and I went to see the movie "Valkyrie," which chronicled the attempt by a brave group of German loyalists and army officers to kill Hitler and take control of the German Army and thereby save Europe and Germany from further destruction. Although the attempt failed, the value of the movie was to tell the world of the valor of the brave men and women

# Blago

THE SENATOR  
BUT YOU  
LIKE A U  
SENATOR

## COLUMN

### Are Israe

If every time adults of a certain neighborhood family go out of the family's house, kids across the street throw rocks at these neighbors — most of the times missing — because they don't like the family's race, at what point does it become justified for these adults to run across the street with guns and bats, and beat kids, including some who had not thrown rocks, to the point of inflicting serious and deadly wounds?

Would these kids stop throwing rocks if the neighbors snatched these rocks back at the

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 "Hospitals in Houston have been used sparingly, since Ike took out UTMB. One thing we've done is rates have been increased from the county that have been paid to local specialists, to get the specialists to accept some indigent patients in the area."  
 The rates, Brannick said, are paid through money allocated within the county budget. The rate change has

...of the...  
 crisis plan to meet with representatives from local hospitals to discuss ways to address the UTMB problem.

...of the...  
 hospital to come up with a plan and be able to back it financially.  
 mtobias@ponews.com

...of the...  
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**CITY OF PORT ARTHUR**  
 Announces  
**A Public Community Meeting**

About  
 "One Block At A Time" Initiative  
 Revitalization/Restoration of City Neighborhoods

When: Thursday, January 8, 2009

Where: DeQueen Elementary Cafeteria  
 740 DeQueen Blvd.  
 Port Arthur, Texas

Time: 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

All Citizens are invited, especially, residents of Initiative Area 1 which is Thomas Blvd. from DeQueen Blvd. to Memorial Blvd., Memorial Blvd. from Thomas Blvd. to Lakeshore Drive, Lakeshore Drive from Woodworth Blvd. to DeQueen Blvd. and DeQueen Blvd. from Lakeshore Drive to 19th Street.

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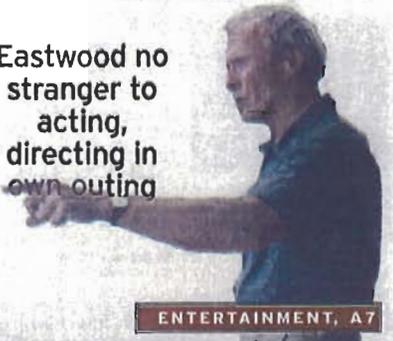
Florida takes down Oklahoma for national championship



SPORTS, B1

### Dual role

Eastwood no stranger to acting, directing in own outing



ENTERTAINMENT, A7



Industrials 8,742.48  
Market listings, Page B4

WEATHER, A3



Today's forecast:  
Friday, partly sunny,  
high 74

Coming Saturday

Meet Nederland Police Department's new assistant chief, Gary Porter

## Port Arthur residents, mayor ready to recapture their city

By Sherry Koonce  
The News staff writer

May Ford has lived in Port Arthur all of her life. She's watched her once placid neighborhood deteriorate to the point where vacant houses have become havens for crime — where blight colors the streets of a city that once stood proudly beside the sea.

"This is not Port Arthur anymore," she said of her San Augustine Street area home.

Ford was one of about 90 Port Arthur residents representing all areas of the city who attended an informational meeting for the Mayor and City Council's brand new One Block at a Time Program.

"If not now, when? If not us, who? Failure is not an option, Mayor Deloria

"Bobbie" Prince told the audience. "Our city deserves better than what we have given it," she said.

At DeQueen Elementary School on Thursday, city residents joined city leaders in a chorus of approval for the program designed to rid the city of unwanted blight, and to revitalize the neighborhoods.

"This is going to be more than just picking up to get all this mess out of our city. There's tires everywhere, old cars not working, trash in yards, and trash in the streets," Ford said.

Prince said she knew cleaning the city was a daunting and long-term task — but one that could be accomplished with hard work and dedication.

"We want to claim ownership of our neighborhoods and change the mindset of

See 'Program,' page A4

## MORE TROUBLE



AP photo

In this Dec. 19, 2008 file photo, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich addresses reporters during a news conference in Chicago. The Illinois House should impeach Gov. Rod Blagojevich for abusing his power, mismanaging Illinois government and committing possible criminal acts, a special committee concluded Thursday, Jan. 8, 2009. See more on this story, A3.

**Lena Marie Bobb**  
**PORT ARTHUR** - Lena Marie Bobb, 57, of Port Arthur entered into eternal rest on Saturday, January 3, 2009 at her residence.

Lena was a life long resident of Port Arthur and a 1970 graduate of Lincoln High School. She was employed with the Port Arthur Independent School District where she retired with 26 years of service.

Lena was preceded in death by her adoptive parents, Anderson and Ollie Bobb; her mother, Rena York Randle; her father, Percy Vital; her step-father, Earl Randle; and her daughter, Sonya Bobb Tyree.

Homegoing Celebration Services are scheduled for Saturday, January 10, 2009 at 2:00 P.M. with visitation from 12 noon until time of the services. Services will take place at Rock Island Missionary Baptist Church with the Rev. Ransom E. Howard, Sr., officiating. Burial will follow at Live Oak Cemetery.

Lena leaves to cherish her memory: her husband of thirty years, Melvin Thomas, Sr.; her son, Marlon Bobb; two grandchildren, Jarnard and Jalisa Bobb; her step-mother, Mrs. Goldie Vital; one aunt, Rose Mary Johnson of Galveston, TX; very special cousins, Alice Lewis, Janet Vital, Kirk Vital, Theresa Harrison McNeil, Stacy Harris, and Josephine H. Simon; five close friends she affectionately called her sisters, Veronica Sneed, Deborah Yeggin Simon, Barbara Booker, Gwendolyn "CANDY" January, and Bernice "BUNNY" Harmon. Lena also leaves a host of other special cousins, relatives, classmates, church family and friends.

**GABRIEL FUNERAL HOME**  
 2500 Procter St.  
 at DeQueen Blvd.,  
 Port Arthur, TX 77640



**Broussards**  
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**722-3456**  
 www.broussardsmortuary.com

Mary Louise January, 43, died Saturday, January 3, 2009 at the Medical Center of Southeast Texas.

She was born October 23, 1965 in Port Arthur, Texas to Joseph January, Sr. and the late Mary Lee Shaw January. Mary was a life-long resident of Port Arthur and while her health permitted, she attended Hughen School. She was preceded in death by her mother, Mary Lee January and her brother, Joseph January, Jr.

Funeral services will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 10 at Shilo Baptist Church with Rev. Samuel Joseph officiating. Burial will follow at Johnson Cemetery under the direction of Gabriel Funeral Home. Visitation for the family and friends will begin at 9:00 a.m. at the church.

She is survived by her devoted father, Joseph January, Sr. and loving sisters, Ivy, Sana, Taunjaerina and Phyllis January all of Port Arthur; two devoted nieces who helped to care for her, Dollisha and Carlette Broussard; two loving nephews, Fred Owens and Joseph January III; a great nephew, Mikeal Arthur; nieces, Raven and Belinda January; a devoted care-giving aunt, Emilie Kelly; aunts, Sarah January, Eva Mae Dowdell of Walnut, CA, Hester L. Thomas of Orange, TX, Ida Ree Oliver of Fayette, MS, Annie Mae Hargro of Lorman, MS, and Billy Ann Early of Chicago, IL; an uncle, Thomas (Hazel) January and a host of other relatives and friends.

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## Program

Continued from A1

our community," Prince said. Prior to Thursday's meeting, city officials have planned for weeks how best to rid the city of blight and revitalize neighborhoods.

City Commissioners are expected Tuesday to approve a budget amendment that would fund the program for the next nine months at a price of \$260,000.

City staff has already started the program, said Beverly Freeman, with the city's Community Development Program.

One Block at a Time will begin in the area around DeQueen Avenue, from Fourth Street to Thomas Boulevard, Woodworth to DeQueen.

Though the program will start along DeQueen, Prince said anyone could go ahead and begin the process of cleaning their neighborhoods, the sooner the better.

Willie Dankins, 53, of Port Arthur said he planned to do what he could to clean his Westside neighborhood, and hoped residents all over the city would do the same. "The thing is, it was not Hurricane Rita or Ike that got our city in this shape. Once you take a man's pride, he has nothing. This program should help the city regain its pride," he said.

In addition to sweat equity from volunteers, the city plans to enforce codes, increase neighborhood police patrols solicit assistance from area business and industrial leaders, nonprofits and churches.

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so successfully for many years," KCSR spokesperson C. Doniele Kane said. "Actually, crossing collisions involving KCSR in Jefferson County are trending down from eight in 2004 to only three in 2008. KCS continues to strive to eliminate grade crossing collisions, including working closely with TxDOT to review crossings and upgrade traffic control where TxDOT experts indicate the need to do so.

"The reduction in collisions between 2004 and 2008 shows we are having success," Kane said.

In an area with a high volume of rail traffic, the county's ranking in this study is not surprising, says State Representative Joe Deshotel (D-Beaumont).

"I'm not surprised," Deshotel said, "But I think a lot of it has to do with the amount of rail traffic we have, and that's largely due to the nature of our area's industry."

Deshotel, who has sat on the Texas State Committee on Transportation since 2005, says area officials have done much to ensure the safety of motorists at crossings by keeping lighted systems and electronic crossing arms updated. Rural crossings that aren't frequented by high volumes of traffic don't warrant such safety measures and the responsibility of making sure the crossings are clear is up to the motorists.

Much of the area's infrastructure comes through Jefferson County by area ports, which are

3. Cameron County (Brownsville): 144 accidents and incidents, seven deaths, 124 injuries.

9. Brazoria County (Angleton-Pearland): 143 accidents and incidents, eight deaths, 112 injuries.

10. Potter County (Amarillo): 123 accidents and incidents, nine deaths, 111 injuries.

11. Fort Bend County (Richmond-Sugar Land): 121 accidents and incidents, 15 deaths, 77 injuries.

12. Bell County (Temple-Belton): 116 accidents and incidents, 16 deaths, 97 injuries.

some of the largest in the nation, Deshotel said. Combine that with Interstate 10 — one of the county's largest traffic corridors — and the potential for the number of incidents increases.

"More cars mean more wrecks and more train traffic means the potential for incidents is there," Deshotel said. "Think of it this way — an area with an airport is more likely to have incidents with aircraft than an area that doesn't see much air traffic at all."

Elizabeth Christian & Associates Public Relations' John Egan, who represents The Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Association, said the purpose of the study was to shed light on rail safety as an issue.

"Our association is pursuing funding in the current legislation that is geared toward improving safety on the freight end

report the number of accidents that occur, but statistics do not give you a flavor as to why they're occurring."

The Port Arthur News last reported a train/vehicle wreck in January 2007, when a car driven by a 78-year-old man collided with a KCS express engine near the Twin City Highway and Boston Avenue track crossing in Nederland. This information echoes statements made by PAFD Chief Blanton, who said if high numbers of train/vehicle incidents are occurring in Jefferson County, they are not occurring in the southern end.

"It does seem that some of the counties on the list make sense; they are metropolitan areas, and port towns with a lot of rail traffic," Blanton said. "I bet there's many years where we never had a train accident at all. It's just not real common here."

mtobias@panews.com

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 p.m.: 0-3-4

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# Big Red basketball

## Lamar readies for Texas A&M Corpus Christi



SPORTS, B1

PORT ARTHUR

# The News

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

# Movie guy

## "Street Fighter" a forgettable adaptation



ENTERTAINMENT, A7

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### STOCK MARKET

March 3, 2009

**Dow Jones Industrials** -37.27  
6,726.02

Market listings, Page A10

### WEATHER, A9



**Today's forecast:**  
Wednesday, mostly sunny, high 73

### Coming Thursday

Miracle baby celebrates birthday



6 06831 33333 3

## One Block at a Time grand kick-off set

By Sherry Koonce  
The News staff writer

Free lunch, a marching band and the promise of sunny weather is on tap Saturday to help kick-off Port Arthur's One Block at a Time program.

The voluntary program to revitalize and restore the city's neighborhoods started in earnest about a month ago with the first gathering of residents willing to roll up their sleeves, provide a bit of muscle and spruce up their city.

Saturday's event, beginning at 8 a.m. at DeQueen Elementary School, 740 DeQueen Blvd., is the official kick-off for the fledgling program.

"So much energy was generated the first time that we decided to have a more grand style kick-off," Reginald Scypion, spokesperson for the One Block at a Time program,

### IN THE KNOW

What: Port Arthur's One Block at a Time program kickoff

When: March 7, beginning at 8 a.m.

Where: DeQueen Elementary School, 740 DeQueen Blvd.

said.

The Memorial High School band will be on hand to lead jump start the festivities. Though volunteers can bring their own, local merchants have donated materials such as rakes, cleaning supplies and small tools to help with the revitalization.

Beginning with the DeQueen area, the initiative focuses on neighborhoods and the cleaning up of unattractive areas of the city. Code enforcement, neighborhood stabilization and crime resolution are areas the city hopes to address with

the One Block at a Time program.

The program will utilize volunteers, youth groups, civic and industrial leaders working in partnership with city workers to help rid the city of blight.

Mayor Deloris "Bobbie" Prince encouraged all citizens who can to come out Saturday and participate by clearing the streets and alleys of paper, aluminum cans, bottles, tires and other debris and to report abandoned vehicles.

City workers will demonstrate safety measures before the volunteers start cleaning the DeQueen area.

Lunch will be provided, courtesy of local grocers.

"It is going to be a beautiful day; the temperature is going to be real good and the event is just going to be a wonderful way to kick-off the clean-up effort," Scypion said.

shoonce@panews.com

The nearly 400 delegates spent Tuesday, the last day of the three-day event, attending sessions and meeting with legislators before heading for home.

The first session was a Texas Association of Business breakfast with Florence Shapiro, chair of the Senate education committee. She said her committee heard so many bad things about schools only being concerned about the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills test, the 15-member committee decided to study the accountability system.

She said the test is based on sanctions with very few incentives and a change of direction was needed.

Another focus of Shapiro's speech is that incoming freshmen should be prepared for college-level work, instead of taking remedial courses at the undergraduate level.

"There's a disconnect between schools and colleges," she said.

See 'Days,' page A4

## Bible serves as decorating guide for Parade of Tables

By Darragh Dolron  
The News staff writer

For centuries, the faithful have pored over the Bible for guidance and comfort.

Turns out, The Good Book offers some decorating ideas, too.

Bible verses inspired table decor at a luncheon that inspired women to donate to a worthy cause. Angels, flowers, bunnies and eggs created individualized place settings at Tuesday's Presbyterian Women Gala Luncheon. The group met at St. John Lutheran Church.

Jesus' call to "Let the children come to me" set Tonya Bricke to work

setting an image of Jesus in a pasture, flanked by sheep and a child, into gold frames for table favors. A plate with the same image, that belonged to her husband's grandmother, was nestled among flowers and a candle.

"It's one of those things," Bricke said, getting a tad emotional as she explained her choices to women at her table.

Carlita Zummo wore a pink bunny sweater to complement the Easter egg tree adorning her table. "He has risen!" was her inspiration verse.

Cheddar's restaurant catered the

See 'Tables,' page A4



Darragh Dolron/The News

Carlita Zummo's egg table symbolizes the risen Christ at the Parade of Tables Presbyterian Women Gala luncheon.



## One Block at a Time grand kick-off Saturday

The Port Arthur News

March 03, 2009 05:13 pm

By Sherry Koonce  
The News staff writer

Free lunch, a marching band and the promise of sunny weather is on tap Saturday to kick-off Port Arthur's One Block at a Time program.

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skoonce@panews.com

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**CALENDAR**

**Friday, March 6**

• First Friday in Groves, dog contest, entertainment, Groves Elementary's Treble Tribe Singers, etc. Family events along Lincoln Ave, Groves. 962-3631.

**Saturday, March 7**

• "Fly Away" Childrens' Kite Workshop for children ages 6 to 12. \$12 per child Saturday, March 7. 983-4881 visit [www.texasartistsmuseum.org](http://www.texasartistsmuseum.org).

**Sunday, March 8**

• Second Sunday at Texas Artists Museum honoring artists of the month, 2:30 p.m. Entertainment by 3 Men and a Mannequin. Open to the public.

Submit calendar items at least two weeks in advance to *Triangle Calendar*, Port Arthur News, 3501 Turtle Creek Drive, Port Arthur, Texas, 77642. E-mail to [pnews@panews.com](mailto:pnews@panews.com) or fax to 724-6851

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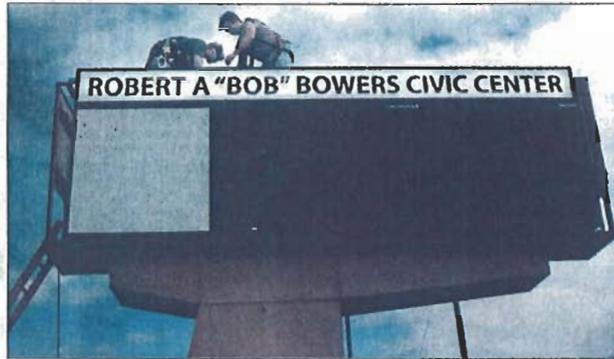
Courtesy photo

Port Arthur Mayor Deloris Prince, at center, is joined by Johnny Lavalais, to her left, store manager for Wal-Mart Supercenter, 4999 Twin City Highway, Wal-Mart staff, and representatives of Booker T. Washington School, Mexican Heritage Society, Junior Achievement and the American Heart Association. The Wal-Mart Foundation donated \$1,500 to Washington school, \$1,000 each to the Mexican Heritage Society, JA and AHA, on Thursday.

**ALL IN THE NAME**

Robert Sjodin, right, and Ricky Sjodin of 2S Sign Company, Inc. in Beaumont work high above ground as they put the new marquee bearing the name Robert A. "Bob" Bowers Civic Center in place Thursday morning. Bowers became the building's namesake during a ceremony in June 2003.

Mike Tobias/The News



**POLICE BRIEFS**

**STABBING SENDS 69-YEAR-OLD TO HOUSTON HOSPITAL**

A disturbance that police say got "out of hand" left a 69-year-old Port Arthur woman with life threatening injuries early Thursday morning.

Port Arthur Police Sgt. Scott Gaspard said the woman was stabbed in the upper body causing serious injury about 12:30 a.m. March 5 at 3605 Procter St. She was first transferred to Christus Hospital St. Elizabeth in Beaumont and

10 in her residence at Crystal Creek Apartments. No suspects in Hickman's death have been identified.

Port Arthur Police Department's Criminal Investigations Division is handling the case.

Anyone with information about this crime or any other felony is urged to call EasTex Crime Stoppers at 724-TIPS. You will not be asked your name and could earn a cash reward.

[mmeaux@panews.com](mailto:mmeaux@panews.com)

**Man and son capture robbery suspects**

BEAUMONT — A homeowner and his son captured

two robbery suspects until police held could arrive about 12:30 a.m. March 5.

Beaumont Police arrived in the 900 block of Stacewood and arrested Santiago Postior Martinez-Estrada, 19, and Marco Garcia, 20, both of

Beaumont on charges of burglary of a vehicle.

According to police, witnesses saw Garcia burglarizing the victim's car while Martinez waited nearby in a vehicle described as a Chevrolet S-10 truck.

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**PORT NECHES POLICE BLOTTER**

Port Neches Police Department responded to the following calls from Feb. 24-March 2:

**Tuesday, Feb. 24**

- Leaving-the-scene accident in the 2800 block of Nall.
- Two people were arrested on traffic warrants.

**Wednesday, Feb. 25**

- Attempted burglary of habitation in the 700 block of Morningview.
- Criminal mischief in the 1100 block of Washington.
- Deceased person in the 1000 block of Van.
- Harassment in the 2100 block of Merriman.
- A criminal trespass warning was issued to a person in the 1100 block of Washington.
- Four people were arrested on traffic warrants.

**Thursday, Feb. 26**

- Leaving-the-scene accident in the 1700 block of Magnolia.
- Assault in the 800 block of Avenue C.
- A person was arrested on a traffic warrant.
- Assault in the 1400 block of Merriman.

**Friday, Feb. 27**

- Theft and credit card abuse in the 700 block of Magnolia.
- A person was arrested a subject for possession of marijuana on Avenue B.
- A person was arrested on a traffic warrant.

**Saturday, Feb. 28**

- A person was arrested for possession of marijuana in the 1500 block of Merriman.

**Sunday, March 1**

- A person was arrested for public intoxication in the 1200 block of Merriman.

**Monday, March 2**

- A person was arrested for assault in the 800 block of Wagner.
- A person was arrested on a Jefferson County warrant for assault.
- Theft in the 800 block of Magnolia.
- Identity theft in the 2700 block of 12th Street.
- Criminal mischief and disorderly conduct in the 600 block of New.
- Two people were arrested on traffic warrants.

SOURCE: Port Neches Police Department offense reports.

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### Men's hoops

Cards look to improve standing



SPORTS, B1

PORT ARTHUR

# The News

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

### Simpson in shambles

Sorry for poor performance



ENTERTAINMENT, A7

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#### WANT TO HEAR?



James just joking about b toward singer Beyonce nowles

Full story, Page A7

No matter the outcome, er are always winners in od

Full story, Page A8

Employees forced to ke off without pay

Full story, Page A9

#### DAILY PRAYER

Creator God, "I praise You, r I am fearfully and wonder-ly made" (Psalm 139:14), men,

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#### STOCK MARKET

February 6, 2009

Dow Jones Industrial +217.52  
8,280.59

Market listings, Page A9

#### WEATHER, A12



Today's forecast: nny and windy with high in the mid 70s



# 'We have a deal'

## Compromise reached on economic stimulus bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — With job losses soaring nationwide, Senate Democrats reached agreement with key Republicans Friday night on an economic stimulus measure at the heart of President Barack Obama's plan for reviving the economy.

"The American people

want us to work together. They don't want to see us dividing along partisan lines on the most serious crisis confronting our country," said Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, one of two GOP senators who signaled support for the bill.

Officials put the cost of the measure at \$780 billion

in tax cuts and new spending combined. No details were immediately available, and there appeared to be some confusion among senators about the price tag.

The agreement capped a tense day of backroom negotiations in which Senate Majority Leader

Harry Reid, joined by White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel, sought to attract the support of enough Republicans to give the measure the needed 60-vote majority.

In addition to Collins, Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., said he would vote for the bill.

Officials said Sen. Edward M. Kennedy's vote would probably be needed for passage, too. The Massachusetts Democrat, battling a brain tumor, has been in Florida in recent days and has not been in the Capitol since suffering a

See 'Stimulus,' page A4

## FOR THOSE ABOUT TO ROCK...



Mike Tobias/The News

Actress-singer-dancer Amy Marlin will take on the task of "channeling" Janis Joplin as she performs in the late singer's style Saturday night for the Gulf Coast Music Hall of Fame show at the "Bob" Bowers Civic Center.

## 'Dead-on Janis' to jam in PA

By Darragh Dolron  
The News staff writer

Multiple personalities are part of Amy Marlin's act. Her true spirit says she is ready to perform her "dead-on Janis" Saturday night.

The actress-singer-dancer is making a three-peat performance of "channeling" Janis Joplin for the Gulf Coast Music Hall of Fame, at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7 at the Robert A. "Bob" Bowers Civic Center.

"Also, I am honored to perform with The Boogie Kings this year ... they are legendary," Martin, a former Nederland resident who now works in The Big Apple, said.

Concert promoter Don Ball has released the performance schedule:

- 7 p.m. — Eazy
- 8:05 p.m. — The Beat Daddys
- 8:50 p.m. — Amy Martin, performing Janis Joplin music

#### A Star for All Stars

Since living in New York City, Amy Martin has performed in Welmar, New York, with Lady Rizo, Nellie McKay and Justin Bond. She premiered her solo shows at legendary venues including The Cutting Room, The Rainbow Room, Joe's Pub and Galepagos for such stars as Karen Black, Elton John, Michael Stipe, Joyce Dewitt, Moby, John Cameron Mitchell and Justin Bond.

Martin has been a professional disc jockey for Jake Shears of the Scissor Sisters, Will Ferrell, Saturday Night Live after-parties, Matchline with John Cameron Mitchell and the Sundance Institute Gala. She spins her own extensive vinyl collection Friday's at Lucky Strike in SoHo.

diverse audiences."

She's been an opening guest for Joan Rivers Live at The Cutting Room NYC and appeared as Reba on an episode of "Trump's Celebrity Apprentice."

Here's what she has to say about New York:

"In my spare time, I like to stroll in Central Park and have a nice picnic lunch, watching the nature and the seasons change. I also photograph the random happenings in this age-old legendary city. New York, the city of all cities. My favorite things to eat here are simple NYC Cheese slices at Ray's Pizza and East Coast Oysters on the shell," Martin said.

"Sometimes it's fun to get on the E train and just go to a random spot, get out and get lost in the city. It's not that big, you know, and you can always hail a cab to bring you back to where you started. The things to find

## PA One Block to begin

By Sherry Koonce  
The News staff writer

Don't plan on sleeping late Saturday. Port Arthur Mayor Deloris "Bobbie" Prince is calling on the city's residents to get up early and come with their shirt sleeves rolled up, ready to begin cleaning the city.

Beginning at 8 a.m., city residents are invited to meet at the downtown pavilion at the corner of Procter Street and Austin Avenue to kick-off the One Block at a Time Beautification program.

Designed to rid the city of unsightly blight while instilling a sense of pride among residents, the One Block at a Time program will utilize city staff, volunteers, church groups, representatives

See 'Block,' page A4

## Talks rough, still ongoing

By David Ball  
The News staff writer

Not much progress has been made locally in talks between the industries of Valero Energy, Chevron Phillips Chemical Co. and Exxon-Mobil. But Bill Day, spokesman for Valero said as long as talks are ongoing, it's a positive.

In a press release from The United Steelworkers union, USW, announced a national tentative pattern agreement negotiated between the USW and the oil sector features wage increases, a ratification bonus, continuation of the current premium contribution structure and no retrogression on items previously settled between

**OBITUARIES**



Ray St. Peter

Celebration of the life of Ray St. Peter, 83, of Beaumont, will be Sunday, February 8, 2009, at 2:00 p.m. in the Claybar Kelley-Watkins Funeral Home Chapel with interment to follow at Claybar Haven of Rest Cemetery. There will be a gathering of friends and family on Saturday, February 7, between 4:00 and 7:00 p.m. at the funeral home. Serving as pallbearers will be Clay Womack, Richard Gilmore, Scott Kerr, Damon Kerr, John Paul Napleton, David Womack, Jerry Lovelady, Terry Watson, Christian Kerry and Cruz St. Peter.

Mr. St. Peter was born, February 14, 1925, in Blox, TX to Dennis and Marie St. Peter and passed away on February 5, 2009 in Houston.

Ray, known to family as Bud or Red, was born in Blox, Texas, attended grade school in Jasper and Junior and Senior High School in Beaumont where he graduated from Beaumont High School in 1942. He joined the U. S. Navy to serve his country in World War II and worked at Pure Oil in Beaumont for several years before going to college. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree from Stephen F. Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas and his ASCP Medical Technology Degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, Texas. He also attended Lamar Junior College in Beaumont and West Texas State University in Canyon, Texas.

Ray began a career in blood banking at the W.E. and Lela Stewart Blood Center in Tyler as Technical Director before taking the position at the Coffee Memorial Blood Center in Amarillo, Texas, as its Technical Director. In 1957, at the request of local physicians, he returned to Beaumont to start a Blood Bank in Beaumont. As founding director of the Beaumont Blood Center (now LifeShare), he served as Executive Director for thirty years. Following a merger of the two blood centers in 1987, he became Vice President and Director of Hospital Relations at LifeShare and served in that capacity until his retirement in 1992.

Ray's dedication to saving lives and helping families in Southeast Texas through his work and community service is unsurpassed. He was very active during his working years and on the Board of Directors for the Young Men's Business League of Beaumont where he served as the Chairman for the Southeast Texas State Fair in 1967 and was a Keyman. He was a member of Masonic Lodge No. 286 and a Shriner, an active member and officer of the Beaumont Lions Club, the 1982 President of the American Red Cross and was a member of the Beaumont Jaycees. He also served on the Board of Directors of Citizens State Bank, now Compass Bank

Beaumont. Ray was very active in Professional Associations such as the American Society of Clinical Pathology, the American Medical Technology Association, and the American Association of Blood Banks where he served on the Inspection and Accreditation Committee. He was very active in and served on the Board of Directors of the South Central Association of Blood Banks from 1976 to 1983 and served on the Board of Directors for the South Central Association of Blood Banks Foundation. He served on the Committee for Red Cell Immunization for The American Blood Resources Association, was active in the Texas Hospital Association.

In 1967, Ray founded Blood and Plasma Research, Inc. of Beaumont, opening centers in Port Arthur, Eagle Pass, College Station, Houston and Metairie, Louisiana, and served as its President and Chairman of the Board of Directors until his death.

Ray loved life and took much joy in entertaining and making life happy for others. His sense of humor was contagious, and will be long remembered for all the jokes he loved to tell. Aside from his dedication to others, he loved being with and spending time with his family. His children and grandchildren meant the world to him.

Those left to cherish his memory are his loving wife, Jeannine St. Peter; daughters, Kristi Lovelady and husband, Jerry, of Beaumont, Rayann St. Peter of Beaumont, and Shelly Kerr and husband, Scott of Port Neches; grandchildren, Jean Elise Browning, Cruz St. Peter, and John Paul Napleton; and great grandchild Morgan Marie Browning.

The family would like to send a special thanks to his caretakers LaTosha Bias, Merce Chavis and Theresa Bias who loved and cared deeply for him during his last few years and to Kathy Boles for being such a loving friend and always coming to our rescue. Many thanks, too, to the firefighters/EMS technicians from Beaumont Fire station number 4, the EMS technicians Beaumont EMS and all the doctors and nurses who so lovingly provided his care.

**CLAYBAR**  
KELLEY - WATKINS

**SERVICES TODAY**

- Clayton Bonnett, 99, Gammier-Oberle Funeral Home, 10:30 a.m.
- Bhiora Forman, Rock Island Baptist Church, 11 a.m.
- Evelyn Jackson, Gabriel Funeral Home, 11 a.m.
- Annie Lee Lightfoot, First World Outreach Ministry, 11 a.m.
- Anny Perkins, Mount Sinai Baptist Church, 2 p.m.
- Dr. Kenneth W. Young, Port Neches-Groves High School auditorium, 10 a.m.
- Ba Vo, Queen of Vietnam Catholic Church, noon
- Barbara Washington, Church of Jesus Christ From God, 11 a.m.

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**Memorials**



Rita V. Alpough  
08/22/1931 - 02/07/2005

Our memories build a special bridge when loved ones have to part to help us feel we're with them still and soothe a grieving heart. Our memories span the years we shared, preserving ties that bind, they build a special bridge of love and bring us peace of mind.

Vincent Alpough, Sr. & Family

**DEATH NOTICES**

Gertie Caruthers Johnson, 73, of Nederland, died Friday, Feb. 6, 2009, Broussard's Mortuary, Nederland.

Frances Ann Robb, 82, of Port Arthur, died Friday, Feb. 6, 2009. Clayton Thompson Funeral Home, Groves.

Cyrus M. "Rusty" Scott, 82, died Friday, Feb. 6, 2009. Levingston Funeral Home, Groves.

**Block**

Continued from A1

from industry — just about anyone willing to provide some sweat equity to help beautify the city.

"There are so many people who are expressing interest in cleaning up our city. I am encouraged by the enthusiasm," Prince said.

From the downtown pavilion, the volunteers will fan out across the city — either starting in the initial targeted area around DeQueen Boulevard, or going to their own neighborhoods.

Those returning to their own neighborhoods can pick up assessment forms to take back and help determine what needs to be done to beautify the area.

Residents can also pick up free shade trees for planting at their homes. The trees will be distributed by the city's Beautification Committee at 3248 39th St. The city's official tree, the Crepe Myrtle, will be available for purchase.

City staff has already begun the campaign beginning with weeding and curb care in city parks, and ongoing debris removal.

The Community Development Department is looking at code violations such as junk motor vehicles, trash and debris on property, etc.

alpoone@pannews.com

**Stimulus**

Continued from A1

seizure on Inauguration Day more than two weeks ago. The senator's office did not comment.

**Janis**

Continued from A1

friends in the past four years of my residency here. I will also be performing Joplin here upon returning from Texas. It will be Off-Broadway and with a full band. I really look forward to that one," she said.

**The Fabulous Boogie Kings**

These guys can't give it up. They've given lots farewell tours, but can't seem to leave their fans. They're known for "Choo Choo Locomotive" and "The Land of a Thousand Dances."

**The Beat Daddys**

The Beat Daddys are still rockin' from Mississippi to frequent stops in the Port Arthur area, co-founders Larry Grisham and Tommy Stillwell say the band delivers a hybrid of rock'n blues. The band recorded "Live at the Quincey Blues Fest 2007."

**Flames**

Continued from A1

Chris Pruitt, general manager with the station, said parade organizers were in the process of changing the logo on the float to the new Fox 4 logo and getting ready for the upcoming celebration before the fire destroyed the building. "We are in such a tailspin. Right now we're trying to take

**Talks**

Continued from A1

the health and safety problems that persistently are not being addressed across the whole industry," USW International President Leo W. Gerard said.

USW International Vice President Gary Bevers heads the National Oil Bargaining program and negotiated with the industry.

"Despite the oil companies earning over \$142 billion in profits last year, they did not think enough of their employees to negotiate meaningful health and safety language that would have been a win-win for them," he said.

Rather than launch a national strike over health and safety that would have hurt the American people at a time of economic crisis, the USW withdrew its health and safety proposal and focused on the economic package.

"The recession had a dampening effect on our proposal for a more significant wage increase," International Vice President Gary Bevers said. "Even though the oil companies made record profits the last few years, they used the poor economy as a shield to prevent us from receiving a higher pay

At \$780 billion, the legislation would be smaller than the measure that cleared the House on a party-line vote last week. It also would mean a sharp cut from the bill that has been the subject of Senate debate for a week. That measure stood at \$937

billion. Beyond the numl though, any agreer would mark a victory for new president and w keep Democratic leader track to fulfill their pro of delivering him a bi sign by the end of next v

**Eazy**

After 30 years on break, Eazy is bringing their swamp pop and classic music back to Southeast Texas. Members say a phone call brought six of the original members to the same response, "where do you want me, and when do you want me there."

Band members are: Dave Shaw on lead vocals; Steve Champagne on bass; Johnny Teague on guitar and vocals; Gerald Hebert on drums and vocals, Oneal "Pooch" Foche on keyboards, guitar and accordion; Shelby Collins on sax and vocals; Doug Deane; on sax and vocals and George Hernandez on trumpet.

**Jerry LaCroix**

This singer and saxophonist worked with Blood, Sweat and Tears; White Trash; Rare Earth; and the Boogie Kings. He toured and performed in Europe, Australia, and The Philippines. LaCroix earned a gold record for Roadwork while performing with White

Trash. He graduated Port Neches-Groves School in 1961.

The event raises fan the Gulf Coast Music H Fame exhibit at the Mu of the Gulf Coast which es memorabilia of area e including Janis J, Johnny & Edgar Winte Clique, Ivory Joe Hi Barbara Lynn, Jc Preston ("Running B Jivin' Gene ("Breaking hard To Do"), The Bopper" J. P. Richardson Phillips ("Sea of Love"), Fayton Sweat (King Cotton Eyed Joe), Coo the Cupeakes ("Matil "Got You On My Mind" Ritter, George Jones, Chesnutt, Tracy Bird, James, 22 TOP, Fr Ford, Dale and Grace, Sledge, B.J. Thomas, 1 Tuys, Lontie Brooks (" Jr.", The Fabulous E Kings, Clarence "Gates Brown and Jo El. St. Clarence "Frog Man" and Joe Barry.

care of our viewers," Pruitt said.

Meteorologist Dana Melancon is also a member of the Royal Krewe of Neptune and a well known personality among the Mardi Gras crowd. Pruitt said he heard Melancon and another person had arrived at the fire with thoughts of getting the float to safety.

"I'm glad they didn't," the general manager said, adding that he was worried for the

safety of Melancon as v the firefighters who batt blaze.

Pruitt said the stati participate in Mardi Or have live news shots on l Feb. 20 as well as telev Total and DCP Aurora. Parade contingent that equipment needed w available to go live on tl safety.

Mardi Gras Sou Texas will be held fro 19-22 in downtown Arthur.

contains the pattern a tement of local issu taining to the fail hand.

There are 78 local contracts that expired Offers for 17 contract been submitted approved as meetin National Oil Policy Tl go before local union bership for ratification d@a1.pannews.com

**LOTTERY**

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a.m. 3-2-4  
p.m. 8-5-1
- Daily 4  
a.m. 7-5-2-2  
p.m. 6-1-5-5
- Cash 5  
4-15-16-29-30
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### Low note

Lamar falls to Nicholls State at home



SPORTS, B1



### Barbie says it all



Pop culture icon turns 50

SUNDAY LIFE, C1

Nation	.....A12
Obituaries	.....A10
State	.....A3
Business	.....A11

WEATHER, A12



Today's forecast: Sunday, mostly sunny, high 79

#### ATTENTION CUSTOMERS

Because of an early deadline, some of Saturday's lottery results were unavailable at press time.



## Foster care teens get royal treatment

By Mary Meaux  
The News staff writer

GROVES — Isabel, wearing a Hollywood-style dress harkening back to the Golden Age of film, slipped a pearl bracelet around her black gloved wrist and smiled.

The 19-year-old's dark hair was swept back from her face and pulled up in an elegant style adding a glamorous effect to her professionally applied makeup.

Her foster mother, Lucille Jacobs, followed the young woman toward a table filled with jewelry and the two began to pick and choose the best adornment to accentuate the dress.

The duo weren't shopping at a high dollar clothing store though. They were at The Courtyard Cafe for the fourth annual Child Protective Services' "Prom Project."

"I feel glamorous and happy," Isabel, a native of See 'Project,' page A9



Mary Meaux/The News

Isabel, 19, left, and her foster mother Lucille Jacobs look through jewelry during the Child Protective Services Fourth Annual "Prom Project," held at The Courtyard Cafe in Groves on Saturday.

## PA residents clean their city

### One Block at a Time begins

By Mary Meaux  
The News staff writer

Twenty-two-month old Zach Florer used his plastic toy chainsaw to "cut" twigs in imitation of the adults around him.

The tike's parents, Mary and Rob Florer, and numerous other groups, spent a portion of Saturday cutting limbs, removing brush and weeds and other such chores during the One Block at a Time program kickoff.

"We want to help cleanup the city and make it a better place for our son," Mary Florer said. "To give him somewhere good to grow up."

In the back area of a residence on DeQueen Boulevard near Lakeshore Drive, Trinity Baptist See 'Block,' page A9

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# Port honors ship on return from maiden voyage

A television star made a return trip to Port Arthur — kind of.

The MV Fairplayer returned to the Port of Port Arthur last Wednesday after its first visit to the port on its maiden voyage in December during the filming of a documentary. This time, the captain and crew were presented with a plaque for good luck.

"The presentation of the plaque commemorating a vessel's maiden voyage is a time-honored maritime tradition. The plaque will be placed in the ship's pilot house and accompany her on the many voyages," A. Morris Albright, port commission vice president said. "It is a welcoming gesture and serves as a symbol of good luck and prosperity from the Port of Port Arthur. We wish the new ship and her crew safe jour-

neys and operations."

On the ship's first visit, Fairplayer was filmed for an upcoming episode of the Discovery Channel's new series "Jumbo Ships." Loaded with project cargo to support local refinery expansions, the ship arrived back for another call. Port officials said they took the opportunity to recognize the ship and its crew.

"The Port of Port Arthur's proximity to the open Gulf, access to rail, highways and the area's industry makes it a logical choice for handling project cargo," Albright said.

The Dutch flagged vessel is 475 feet long and 88 feet wide with a draft of 26.6 feet. Its deadweight capacity is 12,650 tons and its service speed is 16.5 knots. Its cranes have a lifting capacity of 1,800 tons.



Courtesy photo

Port of Port Arthur Vice President, A. Morris Albright is presents a maiden voyage plaque to Captain Johannes H. M. Sebregts of the MV Fairplayer. The Fairplayer is the latest in a fleet of state of the art heavy lift vessels for Netherlands-based Jumbo Shipping.

# IRS shifts away from private debt collectors

WASHINGTON (AP) — So much for privatizing the federal government.

The Internal Revenue Service's decision this week to quit using debt collectors to dun delinquent taxpayers was celebrated by public employee unions as a pendulum shift after watching the Bush administration often opt for private contractors over federal workers to deliver government services.

The IRS program was a small one, bringing in a little more than \$80 million since its inception in 2006. But it represented an ideological toehold for conservatives who believe that private companies are more efficient than government agencies.

It was an ideology embraced by former President George W. Bush,

who famously — and unsuccessfully — toyed with the idea of partially privatizing Social Security.

Privatization won't disappear. It's too widespread in a federal government that relies on private contractors for work as diverse as computer programming and providing security in Iraq. But with a new Democratic administration in charge, experts don't expect to hear much about privatizing government functions from President Barack Obama.

"I think we're going to see a reversal of privatization," said Harvey B. Feigenbaum, a political science professor at George Washington University. "When contracts come up for renewal, they will see if it would be better for the public sector to do the work."

## POLICE BEAT

### Man stabbed in restaurant parking lot

A 34-year-old man is in good condition after suffering a stab wound to his abdomen Friday night.

Port Arthur Police were on scene at Christus Hospital St. Mary about 9:25 p.m. March 7 when the man arrived at the hospital by private vehicle. He told officers that he and his family were entering their vehicle at La Hacienda Restaurant in the 4700 block of Ninth Avenue when the suspect, unknown to the victim, confronted him and began a verbal altercation.

The suspect then aggressively approached the victim and began to assault him. The victim was trying to defend himself when the suspect stabbed him in the left side of the abdomen. The suspect then fled on foot in an unknown direction.

His injuries are not life threatening. Criminal Investigation Division is handling the incident.

Anyone with information about this crime or any other crime is urged to call EasTex Crime Stoppers at 724-TIPS. You will not be asked your name and could earn a cash reward.

## TRIANGLE CALENDAR

### Sunday, March 8

• Second Sunday at Texas Artists Museum honoring artists of the month, 2:30 p.m. Entertainment by 3 Men and a Mannequin. Free and open to the public. 983-4881 or visit [www.texas-artistmuseum.org](http://www.texas-artistmuseum.org).

### Monday, March 9

• Nederland City Council regular meeting, 3 p.m., Nederland City Office Building, 1409 Boston Ave. in Nederland.

• Port Arthur Economic Development Corporation regular meeting, 6 p.m., PAEDC Office Building, 4173

### 39th Street in Fort Arthur.

### Tuesday, March 10

• Newt Gingrich will speak at Blowout 2009, the Texas Energy Museum's annual fund raising dinner, 6:30 p.m. at the Beaumont Civic Center. Table contribution levels range from \$700 to \$10,000. Individual seats are \$87.50. 833-5100.

Submit calendar items at least two weeks in advance to [TriangleCalendar@portarthur.com](mailto:TriangleCalendar@portarthur.com), 3301 Turtle Creek Drive, Port Arthur, Texas, 77642. E-mail to [paneau@panews.com](mailto:paneau@panews.com) or fax to 724-6854

## LOTTERY

### Pick 3

a.m.: 4-9-1  
p.m.: Unavailable

### Daily 4

a.m.: 0-2-6  
p.m.: Unavailable

### Cash 5

Unavailable

### Texas Lottery

Unavailable

## Block

Continued from A1

Church Pastor Mike Due worked to replace the chain on his chainsaw.

"We live here (Port Arthur) and do what we do because we love Christ," Due said. "We want to help restore hope to the residents, a sense of ownership and pride in what we are blessed with."

The One Block at a Time program is a voluntary pro-

gram to revitalize and restore the city's neighborhoods by cleaning up the unattractive areas of the town. The program focuses on increased code enforcement, neighborhood stabilization and crime resolution.

Port Arthur Police Officer Nathan Mingo explained the correlation between untidy neighborhoods and crime.

"It has been proven that in cleaner neighborhoods people have more pride and the quality of life is improved," Mingo said.

Areas where the weeds are overgrown and trash is piled high become havens for the criminal element. These areas provide places to hide and the idea that the surrounding neighbors do not care what is going on around them.

While the kickoff to the program began on DeQueen Boulevard, organizers are hoping other neighborhoods will take a look around them to see what needs to be cleaned.

In a nearby area along DeQueen Boulevard, Jose Lopez, associate pastor at Trinity Baptist Church, along with Rosibel Lopez,



Melny Meaux/The News

Deloris Hammond, at center, pulls weeds from the fence line of a home on DeQueen Boulevard during the One Block at a Time program kickoff on Saturday.

David Sanchez and Janana Herrera, pulled weeds and brush to the curb.

"This makes me feel good to know I'm helping the city of Port Arthur," Jose Lopez said.

About 12 teams made up

of church groups, industry and citizens got up early to help their fellow man and improve their city.

Port Arthur Mayor Deloris "Bobbie" Prince said other neighborhoods can join in to clean their area as well.

"If you want help in revitalizing your neighborhood we can do an assessment and try to provide the resources necessary," Prince said.

"DeQueen was just a seedling, we want this to spread out," Mingo added.

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