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Beaumont traffic stop leads to felony drug indictment

By Megan Zapalac
STAFF WRITER

A traffic stop for “improper lighting” has turned into a felony indictment on drug charges.

A now-32-year-old in early June was indicted by a Jefferson County grand jury for possession of a controlled substance 4g.

Around 11:20 p.m. on Oct. 9, 2022, a Beaumont police officer was patrolling the 8000 block of College Street when they made a traffic stop due to improper lighting. The officer then discovered the then-31-year-old driver had several Beaumont warrants and arrested him, according to a police report from the Beaumont Police Department.

The report did not say what the warrants were regarding.

A search of the vehicle was conducted after the officer smelled marijuana coming from it. The officer allegedly found 10.8g of suspected cocaine as well as a scale, joint roller and a rolling tray. Officers also found a handgun stored with the suspected cocaine on the front seat passenger floorboard, the report said.

The man was taken to the Jefferson County jail for possession of a controlled substance 4g.

Council OKs 12th day off for city employees

By Courtney Pedersen
STAFF WRITER

The city of Beaumont has added a 12th designated holiday for employees.

The Beaumont City Council on Sept. 26 unanimously approved Presidents Day as an official holiday for city employees.

Presidents Day, which became a federal holiday in 1968, is celebrated on the third Monday in February to honor of the first United States President George Washington, whose birthday is Feb. 22, and 16th President Abraham Lincoln, whose birthday is Feb. 12.

Ward II City Council member Mike Getz said both presidents deserve to be honored. However, he expressed concern about the financial impact on adding an additional holiday to city staff's calendar.

Beaumont City Manager Kenneth Williams said although he does not have an exact number, he is bringing issues to the council based on his observations, one of which being it needs to do more for employees.

“This is one way to do some things like that, by having an additional holiday, it's not something... you put a price tag on sometimes, but it helps morale,” Williams said. “We need things to do to put our employees in a good place, in a good place with morale.”

Williams said that the money for the additional holiday has already been budgeted.

Holiday continues on A4



Renderings courtesy of SWA

A draft downtown plan for “Vision 2035: Downtown Beaumont” was presented on Sept. 21 to the Downtown Planning and Development Advisory Committee by the city's contracted consulting firm, SWA.



The future of Crockett Street?

Renderings show new potential for a modern downtown

By Courtney Pedersen
STAFF WRITER

Draft renderings of the city of Beaumont's proposal for Crockett Street and greater downtown show a more modern take, complete with a canal and new promenade.

The draft downtown plan for “Vision 2035: Downtown Beaumont,” was presented on Sept. 21 to the Downtown Planning and Development Advisory Committee by the city's contracted consulting firm, SWA. However, the plan has yet to go to the Beaumont City Council.

Crockett continues on A4

Texas border wall resumes construction despite Biden opposition

By Jeremy Wallace and Benjamin Wermund
STAFF WRITERS

The federal government is resuming border wall construction in South Texas amid another surge of border crossings, even as President Joe Biden reasserts his opposition to the project.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas has announced he's using his authority to waive some federal regulations to “install additional physical barriers and roads in the Rio Grande Valley Sector.”

“There is presently an acute and immediate need to construct physical barriers and roads in the vicinity of the border of the United States in order to prevent unlawful entries into the United States” in an area of Starr County south of Laredo, Mayorkas said in a document

filed in the Federal Register on Thursday announcing the move.

His filing outlines about 20 miles of construction.

Yet on Thursday, Biden told reporters that “nothing” has changed in his opposition to building the wall. He said his administration's hands were tied after Congress in 2019 passed legislation funding the wall construction in Starr County.

“The money was appropriated for the border wall. I tried to get them to reappropriate, to redirect that money. They didn't,” Biden said. “They wouldn't. In the meantime, there's nothing under the law other than they have to use the money for what it was appropriated for. I can't stop that.”

A spokesperson for the Homeland Security Department said the administration is



Delcia Lopez/Associated Press file

On Wednesday the Biden administration announced that they waived 26 federal laws in South Texas to allow border wall construction, marking the administration's first use of a sweeping executive power employed often during the Trump presidency.

now legally required to spend the money building a wall but stressed that the administration is also installing detection technology, lighting and access roads.

“The administration repeatedly called on Congress to cancel or reappropriate remaining border barrier funding and in-

stead fund smarter border security measures, like border technology and modernization of land ports of entry, that are proven to be more effective at improving safety and security at the border,” the spokesperson said.

Though Biden says he has no

Wall continues on A4

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CROCKETT

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The Enterprise received the presentation with draft renderings from the city of Beaumont via an open records request.

The presentation includes draft renderings of the possible downtown plan with bird's eye and street views of several proposed amenities.

Potential improvements include a new city hall, Civic Center parking deck with 200 spaces, a bandstand/river theatre, Neches pedestrian bridge and a riverwalk parking deck, also with 200 spaces. Other projects include a riverwalk/waterway, hotel and convention center upgrades and two projects associated with private developers.

The proposal focuses heavily on the nearly \$114 million waterway and riverwalk with a quarter-mile long canal on Crockett Street, traveling from Neches Street to Main Street, and 3,500 of new promenade. The canal would end close to the Event Centre and lake, which were completed in 2012.

"A series of green spaces punctuate the waterway with a shaded oasis for dining, boating and other leisure activities," a video highlighting the proposal states. "Existing buildings on the waterway are repurposed to preserve the city's rich architectural heritage."

Early cost estimates, which do not account for possible future inflation, include nearly \$114 mil-



Renderings courtesy of SWA

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lion for the canal waterway, nearly \$20.7 million for a new city hall and at least \$22.4 million for other listed projects, according to the downtown plan draft.

Advisory Committee Chair Jim Broussard previously told The Enterprise that Beaumont and its downtown need to be brought up to modern expectations.

"I feel that our city is at a point where we need to make some major infrastructure improvements," he said. "I think the time is right for this, we've got thousands and thousands of jobs coming to our area in the petrochemical industry and construction. We need to keep these people in our community. We need to give them good quality of life."



WALL

From page A1

choice but to allow construction to continue, some Democrats in Congress are blasting the administration for its move. U.S. Rep. Veronica Escobar, D-El Paso, called the walls a waste of time and money.

"I urge the White House to reconsider this decision — especially the disastrous choice to waive environmental laws — and work with Congress to reinvest these funds in border modernization and technology to improve safety and security," Escobar said.

U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar, D-Laredo, told the Associated Press: "I continue to stand against the wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars on an ineffective border wall."

Meanwhile on Thursday, former President Donald Trump's campaign was claiming victory, telling reporters that Biden was admitting Trump was right on the border wall.

The U.S. General Accounting Office said that during the Trump administration, the U.S. built "458 miles of border barri-



Herika Martinez/AFP/TNS

Migrants queue at the border wall to be received by Border Patrol agents after crossing the Rio Grande river from Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua state, Mexico to El Paso, Texas, December 2022.

er panels across the southwest border from January 2017 through January 2021. Most (81%) of the miles of panels replaced existing barriers."

The U.S. border with Mexico is more than 2,000 miles long, including over 1,200 miles in Texas.

Anti-wall advocacy groups were quick to blast the Biden administration for its attempt to push ahead with the Starr County project.

"The Biden administra-

tion's decision to rush into border wall construction marks a profound failure," said Jonathan Blazer, director of border strategies at the American Civil Liberties Union. "On the campaign trail, President Biden put it best when he said that the border wall is not a serious policy solution — and we couldn't agree more. Instead of upholding this promise, the Biden administration is doubling down on the failed poli-

cies of the past that have proven wasteful and ineffective."

The move in Starr County comes as the number of migrants encountered by the Border Patrol in the Rio Grande Valley has tripled since June. U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported just over 11,000 encounters in June. In August, that number jumped to more than 46,000, making it the most-crossed area in Texas.

open here and staff thought that was funny, but it was really quiet," Williams said.

The state of Texas, Jefferson County and city of Nederland are closed on Presidents Day as well.

City Attorney Sharae Reed said the holiday would not apply to the current police and fire contracts and would need to be added to be included.

"We're still open as a

city, the police, essential employees are going to be working as always out there," Williams said. "This is something I think would go a long way to the well being and the morale of our employees."

HOLIDAY

From page A1

"As we were working last Presidents Day, it was so quiet in the office like we were the only business

DECEASED

Jason Dale Boudoin, 38, of Groves, died October 3, 2023. Melancon-Levingston Funeral Home in Nederland.

Courtney Douresseau, 31, of Beaumont, died October 4, 2023. Proctor's Mortuary - Beaumont.

John Bennis Dwire, 76, of San Augustine, died October 2, 2023. Wyman Roberts Funeral Home, San Augustine.

Bobby Linn Glaze,

77, of Nederland, died October 1, 2023. Melancon-Levingston Funeral Home in Nederland.

James E. Jenkins, 72, of San Augustine, died September 23, 2023. Wyman Roberts Funeral Home, San Augustine.

Juanita Mazzola, 86, of Hamshire, died October 5, 2023. Broussard's, 134 West Buccaneer Drive, Winnie.

Betty Lee Melton, 91, of Orange, died October 4, 2023. Clay-

bar Funeral Home, Orange.

Betty Ruth Nash, 79, of San Augustine, died October 2, 2023. Wyman Roberts Funeral Home, San Augustine.

Gene Smith, 81, of Baytown, died October 4, 2023. Proctor's Mortuary - Anahuac.

Leah Van Cleve, 87, of Lumberton, died October 4, 2023. Broussard's, 505 North 12th Street, Nederland.

SERVICES TODAY

Thomas "PePaw" L. Dearbonne, Broussard's, 2000 McFaddin Avenue, Beaumont, 10 a.m.

John Bennis Dwire, Corinth Cemetery, San Augustine, 2:30 p.m.

Glen F. Moon, First United Methodist Church, 11 a.m.

Mona Britton Plunk, Resthaven Cemetery, 2 p.m.

Ann Hodges Taylor, Broussard's, 1605 North Major Drive, Beaumont, 10 a.m.

LIFE TRIBUTES

Dianna "Dinah Fay" Davis

1953 ~ 2023

Dianna Fay Lockwood was born on December 30, 1953 in Port Arthur, TX to Thelma Pleasant & Horace Lockwood. She entered into eternal rest on Tuesday, September 19, 2023. Services will be held on Saturday October 7, 2023 at Antioch Missionary Baptist Church located at 3920 W Cardinal Dr. Beaumont, TX 77705 Visi-



tation will begin at 10am and Service will be immediately following at 12pm.

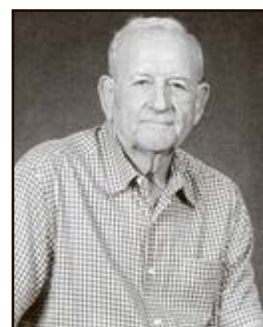
Thomas Lee Dearbonne

1926 ~ 2023

Thomas "PePaw" L. Dearbonne, 97, of Beaumont, died Tuesday, October 3, 2023. He was born on July 27, 1926, in China, Texas, to Ida Forest and Anton Dearbonne.

Thomas loved yardwork and enjoyed mowing his four acres. He enjoyed hunting and was a family man that loved his family dearly. Thomas was generous with his time and money. He was a member of Knights of Columbus and was the first Grand Knight at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Fannett. Thomas also supported the St. Vincent de Paul Society and donated to veterans.

Survivors include his children, Jerry Dearbonne and his wife, Vernie, of Spring; Janell Hardy and her husband, Bill, of Silsbee; George Dearbonne and his wife, Judy Boudoin, of LaBelle; and Ida Brevell and her husband, Randy, of Nederland; caretaker, Ann Harris, of Fannett; grandchildren, Patricia and her husband, Josh; Jackie and her husband, Kevin; Aimee; Zachary and his wife, Kali; Joseph and his wife, Misti; Brad and his wife, Melissa; Nikki; Lauren and her husband, TJ; and Jordan; twenty-three great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren; sisters, Bobbie Foster and Carol Guidry; and fur baby, Lizzi.



He was preceded in death by parents; wife, Bessie Mae Dearbonne; and siblings, Bill Dearbonne, Lois Lacaze, and Danny Dearbonne.

Memorial contributions for Mr. Dearbonne may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, Tennessee 38105 or St. Vincent de Paul Society, PO Box 2213 Winnie, Texas 77665.

A gathering of Mr. Dearbonne's family and friends will be from 5:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m., with his Rosary to be recited at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, October 5, 2023, at Broussard's, 2000 McFaddin Avenue, Beaumont. His funeral service will be 10:00 a.m., Friday, October 6, 2023, at Broussard's, with his interment to follow at Landrum Cemetery, Fannett.

Complete and updated information may be found at: broussards1889.com.



Dorothy Townley Lafitte

1928 ~ 2023

Dorothy Lafitte passed away peacefully on Sunday October 1, 2023, with her husband of 75 years by her side. Born on February 11, 1928, Dorothy Mae Townley Lafitte was a lifelong resident of the Golden Triangle. She was the youngest child of Gillesse Lalande of New Iberia, LA., and Hulen Townley of Weir Mississippi. She attended St Mary's and St James elementary schools, Woodrow Wilson Jr High and graduated in 1946 from Thomas Jefferson high School. After graduation she attended and graduated from Lamar Junior College with an associate degree in general studies. In 1947 she was voted Sweetheart of Lamar by her peers.

Dorothy married her high school sweetheart, Carroll Lafitte in 1948 and a busy life began with a career in banking, initially at First National Bank in Port Arthur and later as Vice President of Mobile Banking at First Bank & Trust in Groves. Dorothy was a member of the Immaculate Conception Mother's Club, one of the first volunteers with the Mother's March of Dimes, president of the Groves Garden Club and later president, member of the board of directors and champion for the preservation of the historical Department Club and Rose Hill Manor. Dorothy and Carroll loved to travel and spent many of her later years visiting countries all over the world. She was a beach lover and avid collector (and authority) on tiny pre-war "penny" dolls and kewpie dolls.



Graveside services were held Thursday, October 5th.

Dorothy was preceded in death by her parents, her brothers Hulen Townley Jr, Arthur Townley, and grandson Grant Gay.

She is survived by her husband Carroll Lafitte, daughters Vicki Lafitte Gay (husband Dib) and Cindy Lafitte Proske (husband Charlie). Also, five grandchildren: Robert (Rob) Stokes, Amy Proske Becker, Molly Proske, Hillary Gay Summers (husband D.J.) and Sallie Proske and six great grandchildren: Connor Stokes, Charlie Ann Becker, Logan Summers, Tiller Becker, Liam Summers, and Lukas Summers as well as 2 nieces and 6 nephews.

The Lafitte Family would like to send a special thanks and appreciation to Delores "Dorie" Cruz and her extraordinary team of caregivers: Malou Bonin, Mary Ann Breaux, Cristina Steele, Cathy Datar, Elvie Stephenson, and Donor Herrera.

Dorothy will be remembered as a volunteer at Beaumont's St Anthony's parish, a happy & loving mother & grandmother and a devoted Catholic who supported many church causes.

Jessie Levada Lewis

1944 ~ 2023

Jessie Levada Lewis, 79 of Lumberton passed away Sunday, October 2, 2023.

Funeral service will be 2 pm Sunday, October 8, 2023 at Gateway Tabernacle Church in Kirbyville with burial at Trout Creek Cemetery. Visitation will be 5-7 pm Saturday, October 7 at Adams EE Stringer Funeral Home in Kirbyville.

Born September 18, 1944 to Jessie Bean and Martin Effie (Fish), she worked as a mail carrier.

She is survived by husband, Charles Glenn Lewis, Sr.; son, Glenn Lewis, Jr. and Shana of Colorado; daughters, Jana Thomas and



Brandon of Lumberton, Kelli Bailey of New Caney; sister, Beth Eldridge of Jasper; grandchildren, Jimmy, Emily, Audrey, "Boo"; great grandchild, Oliver; grandchild by heart, Jordan and his children, Natalie and Archer.

She was preceded in death by parents; sister, Joyce Gray; brother, David Bean; granddaughter, Charlee Swearingen.