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Blessing of the Waters held at Riverfront Park



Photos by Kim Brent/Beaumont Enterprise

Beaumont Bishop David Toups leads a Blessing of the Waters ceremony on Saturday on the banks of the Neches River in Riverfront Park. The annual ceremony was prompted in 2020 by the threatening approach of Hurricane Laura.

As hurricane season nears, bishop continues annual ceremony

By Kim Brent
STAFF WRITER

The newly restored Riverfront Park, which was destroyed by the swollen, surging waters of the Neches River during Hurricane Harvey in 2017, was an apt backdrop for Beaumont Bishop David Toups' annual Blessing of the Waters on Saturday.

The ceremony has become a local tradition as the start of hurricane season nears, one prompted by the threatening approach of Hurricane Laura in 2020.

Toups had just barely been installed as the Beaumont Diocese's bishop when "Hurricane



Toups said that "our community has suffered a great deal in previous years, so we just want God to be with us."

Laura was barreling down on us," he told the dozens in the crowd gathered beneath the

park pavilion. "I said, 'Hey, let's go down to the waters and ask God's blessing,' because what do

we do when we don't know what to do? We pray."

The ceremony represents a very simple gesture — asking God to be with the Southeast Texas community, to dissipate and weaken any approaching storms for the preservation of life and property.

"Our community has suffered a great deal in previous years, so we just want God to be with us," Toups said. "And if we are hit by a hurricane or a terrible storm at some point in the future, we're also asking God's blessing ... to give us the courage to stand together, to give us the courage to help one another and to rebuild."

Blessing continues on A6

Boone shares his goals as city manager

Focus to include raising population closer to 120,000

By Bianca Thomas
STAFF WRITER

Beaumont's new city manager was featured as guest speaker at the recent Woodland Acres Neighborhood Association meeting.

Chris Boone shared his goals as the new city manager during the May 11 meeting.

Boone began by explaining his role as city manager and

said his reason for attending the meeting was to ensure that those who may not be familiar with the city's system could have a smooth transition to a new manager.

Boone also shared his vision for the city.

"In terms of my vision for the city, one of the things I want to focus on is trying to get our population up," Boone said. "The closest we ever got to 120,000 people was 65 years ago. Right now, our population is about 114,500 people, so my goal is to try to get us moving back in the direction of 120,000."

The new city manager said said his other priorities include public safety, infrastructure, financial management and transparency, customer service and economic development.

Boone will attend other neighborhood association meetings in Beaumont to share his vision with residents.



Boone

PET OF THE WEEK



Megan Zapalac/Beaumont Enterprise

Jedi, believed to be about 1½ years old, was brought to Beaumont Animal Care as a stray.

Jedi the loving, active husky in need of high-energy household

By Megan Zapalac
STAFF WRITER

A dog named Jedi is looking for a loving, active home and is

the Beaumont Enterprise Pet of the Week.

Jedi, a husky believed to be about 1½ years old, is a loving dog brought to Beaumont Animal

Care as a stray, said Viviana Lopez, the agency's adoption, foster and marketing coordinator. As a husky, Jedi is active and will need a high-energy household.

Early voting in Texas' runoff elections starts

By Isaac Yu
STAFF WRITER

The campaign battle between U.S. Sen. John Cornyn and Attorney General Ken Paxton enters its final stretch on Monday as voters head to the polls for the start of early voting in the state's primary runoff elections.

Republicans and Democrats will solidify their choices in several other races, too, including for attorney general and a handful of U.S. House seats that could determine the balance of power in Congress.

The races are likely to be decided by just a small pool of voters, with historical participation in runoffs reaching just a fraction of turnout in primary or general elections.

The winners will go on to the November general elections.

Here's what to know:

When can I vote?

Early voting will last just

one week, from Monday through Friday with no weekend hours.

The election will take place on May 26, the Tuesday after Memorial Day.

Am I eligible to vote in the runoff?

Any Texas resident who successfully registered to vote before April 27 is eligible to vote in the runoffs. You can check if your registration is active on the Texas Secretary of State's website.

Voters must choose whether to participate in the Republican or Democratic primary runoff election. Those who participated in the March GOP primary can vote only in the Republican runoff, and the same is true for Democrats. Those who did not vote in the primary can choose to vote in either runoff.

Who competes?

If no single candidate won

Election continues on A6

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