

“Everyone in the area wants to see our costumes so we hold them close to our chest like a poker player. We want the public to be surprised and wowed.” But the main issue for Simon is security, she said. In the past she has met people who were scared to drive to Port Arthur’s downtown for the event, an issue Simon scoffs at.

To date there has not been a major incident during the Port Arthur event.

Every year hundreds of thousands of people visit Mardi Gras of Southeast Texas, some camping out in trailers and setting up food booths days before the festivities begin.

**LOCAL MARDI GRAS  
EVENTS HOLD FUN FOR  
ALL**

The cities of Port Arthur, Beaumont and Orange have big plans for their own Mardi Gras celebrations.

While the French term “Mardi Gras” translates to “Fat

Tuesday,” the day before Ash Wednesday, local celebrations blend colorful floats, beads, parades, King cake and music. Here’s the scoop:

**Port Arthur**

Organizers with Mardi Gras of Southeast Texas are planing four days of fun beginning Thursday, Jan. 31 and continuing through Sunday, Feb. 3.

This year’s theme is Vacation Destinations

• Thursday, Jan. 31

Courir du Mardi Gras Parade, concerts, carnival and more

• Friday, Feb. 1

Krewe of Krewe’s Parade, concert, carnival and more

• Saturday, Feb. 2

Krewe of Aurora Grand Parade, concerts, carnival and more

• Sunday, Feb. 3

Munchkin Parade, Truck Parade, concerts, carnival and more

For more information, log-on to [mardigras.portarthur.com](http://mardigras.portarthur.com).

**Beaumont**

Mardi Gras on the Neches has a

new name and new look for 2008.

Mark Stratton, chairman, said the Beaumont Mardi Gras will be held on Feb. 1-2 in downtown Beaumont.

Events include a carnival, food vendors, floats and music. The parade route has changed because of construction and will move through Pearl and Orleans streets, he said. Businesses along the way will decorate for the occasion and have Cajun and Zydeco music playing for the crowds. Stratton also plans to have musicians on each street corner along the parade route.

The 2008 event will not be centered around Crockett Street like last year’s event was, he said.

For more information, call Stratton at 724-0223 or Christina Delgadillo at 749-4665.

**Orange**

The Annual Mardi Gras/Gumbo Cook-off is scheduled for Jan.

24-26, at Riverfront Park in historical downtown Orange.

This year’s theme is “A Broadway Musical.”

Julia Myers, business manager for the Greater Orange Area Chamber of Commerce, said the 2008 event will feature a Ms. Fat Tuesday Mock Beauty Contest, carnival, kids zone and more. The gumbo cook-off has been around for upwards of 32 years and was integrated into the Mardi Gras celebration in 2005.

Some of the events include:

• Thursday, Jan. 24; carnival

• Friday, Jan. 25; Courir du Mardi Gras, carnival, Munchkin Parade and Ms. Fat Tuesday Mock Beauty Pageant

• Saturday, Jan. 26; carnival, various entertainment throughout the day, gumbo judging, Rubber Ducky Derby on the Sabine, Krewe of Krewe’s Parade

For details about the event and a full schedule, log-on to the Web site at <http://goacc.org>.

