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By:  Manuel H.C.R. No. 61

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The City of Port Arthur has been steeped in Cajun culture for nearly a century; and

WHEREAS, Located in the southeastern corner of Texas, Port Arthur is a close neighbor to the Louisiana bayou region where the Acadians, or Cajuns, settled in the mid-1700s after being forced out of Nova Scotia; in 1927, the Great Mississippi Flood drove tens of thousands from their homes in the Acadiana parishes of Louisiana, and many of those displaced made their way to Port Arthur, drawn by the ample employment opportunities in the burgeoning petroleum industry and other sectors of the coastal economy; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Cajuns brought their distinctive culture, which took root and flourished in their adopted city; local cuisine acquired a Cajun flavor, with a boost from the family that opened Judice's French Market in 1927; the restaurant helped popularize such delicacies as crawfish, gumbo, and hot boudin, and its longtime spokesman, A. J. Judice, "the Crazy Frenchman," became a beloved ambassador of Cajun heritage; among other achievements, he served as the impresario of the improbable pastime of crawfish racing, which led to his tongue-in-cheek appointment as the sport's commissioner by Texas governor Preston Smith in the early 1960s; Port Arthur's Cajun community was also home to whiskey distiller and entrepreneur Jack LaBove, who helped the city survive the dark days of Prohibition; and

WHEREAS, Renowned for their love of music, Port Arthur residents danced to such artists as Harry Choates, the "Godfather of Cajun Music" and the "Fiddle King of Cajun Swing," whose 1946 recording of "Jole Blon" is considered iconic; favorite venues included the Rodair Club, which showcased the music and nurtured aspiring musicians such as accordionist Jude Moreau; today, younger players like Donovan Bourque continue the tradition, keeping the infectious Cajun rhythm part of the city's soundtrack; and

WHEREAS, Warm and friendly Cajun hospitality thrives everywhere in Port Arthur, from fais-dodo house parties to major events, among them the annual Cajun Heritage Fest; moreover, the Museum of the Gulf Coast does its part to preserve and focus attention on Cajun history and traditions; and

WHEREAS, Port Arthur takes great pride in the Cajun influence that pervades so many aspects of life in the city, and residents of all backgrounds enjoy celebrating these distinctive elements of their culture; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the 88th Legislature of the State of Texas hereby designate Port Arthur as the official Cajun Capital of Texas; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That, in accordance with the provisions of Section 391.003(e), Government Code, this designation remain in effect until the 10th anniversary of the date this resolution is finally passed by the legislature.