

City of Kemah, Texas
GATEWAY TO THE BAY



PRESS RELEASE

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**42nd Annual Blessing of the Fleet Weekend to
Include Gumbo Cook-Off and Bluegrass Festival**

Kemah, Texas – The 42nd Annual Blessing of the Fleet will be held Sunday May 2 at 2:00 p.m. on the Clear Creek Channel along the Kemah Boardwalk. The ‘Blessing’ will include Shrimp Boats and Pleasure Boats that will be colorfully decorated and will file past the Cadillac Authentic Mexican Restaurant where they will be blessed by the officiating priest and minister.

The main focus on this year’s blessing is to bring awareness to the local shrimpers who were directly affected by Hurricane Ike.

The celebration goes beyond the beautifully decorated boats; it is an event that also recognizes the importance of the shrimp fishermen and the seafood industry to our local community and economy. Boat owners of all types are invited to enter the parade, decorate their boats and receive a blessing. Sponsorships for the fishing vessels are available. Cash prizes will be given to the top three entries in commercial class and trophies for the pleasure craft, at the Awards Ceremony starting at 4:30 p.m. on the

Boardwalk. Although entries will be accepted the day of the event, early registration is appreciated.

Bring family and friends to witness the festive occasion as the colorful crews parade down the channel celebrating this time honored tradition. Chairman Tom Hults stated, “Whether you enter your boat or just enjoy the parade, this is one event that you won’t want to miss!”

The **Kemah Gumbo Cook-Off** in conjunction with the Blessing of the Fleet activities will take place Saturday, May 1, all day at Harris Street, behind the Kemah Visitor Center. For team information and cook-off registration call Sherry Tinerella at 713-907-0419. The public is invited to purchase gumbo from the teams.

A **Bluegrass Music Festival** will kick-off the Blessing of the Fleet activities starting Friday night, April 30 at 7:00 p.m. – 10:00 p.m. at the Kemah Visitor Center parking lot at corner of Harris & 6th Street. The music will start again at Saturday, May 1 at Noon until 10:00 p.m. and resume at 5:00 p.m. Sunday, May 2 after the Blessing of the Fleet Awards and will conclude the weekend festivities at 8:00 p.m. There is no admission for this family event. The Bluegrass music line up will include the bands; Lonestar Bluegrass Band, Austin Colony, Buffalo Nickel, White Dove, Cypress Creek, Tayhoss, and Moonlight Revival. Bluegrass ‘jammers’ are welcome also.

For more information on the Blessing of Fleet, the Boat Parade, Gumbo Cook-Off and the Bluegrass Music Festival log on to the City of Kemah website, www.kemah-tx.gov or call the Kemah Visitor Center at 281-334-3181, toll 877-775-3624. For lodging accommodations call the Kemah Visitor Center. For additional information on the Blessing of the Fleet boat entry, contact Tom Hults at 713-545-5246. *“Stay and Play on Galveston Bay!”*

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