

## New Orleans Fun Along the NC Coast

*Coastal communities celebrate Mardi Gras with all the pageantry*

By Renee C. Gannon



*Photo courtesy of Beaufort Business Association*

*The purple, gold and green flow throughout Beaufort, Gloucester and Oak Island each year in celebration of Mardi Gras.*

These local events feature parades, carnivals, Cajun food and of course, music. Mardi Gras — March 4 this year — is held just before the start of Lent, a period of fasting preceding Easter. Parades, parties and carnivals typically ramp up weeks before Ash Wednesday, with the last day of celebration held the day before, known as Fat Tuesday (or in French, "Mardi Gras").

## Beaufort



*Beaufort Mardi Gras (Photo courtesy of Beaufort Business Association)*

jugglers, unicyclists, and more at the carnival before the parade begins at 3 p.m. The parade, complete with the Mardi Gras King and Queen, starts at Front Street at Live Oak, onto Turner Street to the Carteret-Craven Courthouse. The Cajun Cookoff will be at the Beaufort Historic Grounds on Turner Street. Saturday evening features the Masquerade Ball. The weekend winds down at the Sinners Remorse Brunch on Sunday morning.

What started more than 10 years ago as the "World's Shortest Parade" in downtown Beaufort has grown into a two-day event: [the Beaufort Mardi Gras Carnival Weekend](#).

"The parade started just to get people downtown," explains Nelson Owens, executive director of the Beaufort Business Association. "Now we have more than 5,000 people attend, with many coming from across the state, even from South Carolina and Virginia."

The fun kicks off with a street carnival and parade on Saturday morning, March 1. Visitors enjoy Louisiana-inspired food, music, kids' activities, stilt walkers,