

Azalea City News

McComb hosts "Running through Azaleas"

Pike County Chamber of Commerce—McComb, Mississippi

The McComb Rotary Club and McComb Garden Club are hosting the 4th annual "Running through the Azaleas" 5k run on Saturday, March 29.

The event is held in conjunction with the Pike County Azalea Festival, March 24 to April 5, 2008.

The run begins at 8 a.m. at Edgewood Park in McComb. Pre-registration is \$15 and race day registration is \$20. An awards presentation is scheduled for 10 a.m.

For more information, contact Rachel Wilson Michel at 601-684-6700.

Azalea trail bike ride kicks off festival

Valdosta, Georgia

Offering four different routes, the Azalea Festival Century Bike Ride in Valdosta features a gently rolling course on the back roads of South Georgia, passing farms, lakes, and cypress ponds.

Sponsored by the City's Parks and Recreation Department, it is a fully SAG supported event. The century route is 107 miles long. Shorter routes of 75, 49, and 29 miles are also available. All participants receive a short-sleeve shirt. Century finishers also receive a hat.

Set for March 8, 2008, the bike ride is the first event of the 2008 Valdosta-Lowndes Azalea Festival, a two-day celebration with parades, fireworks, kid zone, arts and crafts, and music.

The event begins at 8 a.m. at the South Lowndes Recreation Complex. Registration is \$25. On-site showers and camping is available. Helmets are required for all riders. For more information, contact Sirocus Barnes at 229-333-1861 or visit www.valdostasportsandevents.com.

Little Princess Garden Party planned

By Sarah O'Brien—Nacogdoches, Texas

Little girls are invited to dress in their favorite princess costumes or garden party outfits (magic wands will be provided) for an afternoon of royal treatment during the Little Princess Garden Party at the Ruby M. Mize Azalea Garden on the campus of Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas.

The event features refreshment, crafts, party favors, musical entertainment, and a garden tour of the largest azalea garden in Texas. Little princes are also welcome to attend.

Two parties are planned to accommodate all the fairy princesses wishing to attend. The parties are at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., Saturday, March 29, 2008, and are two of the highlights of the ninth annual Nacogdoches Azalea Trail. The princesses' escorts will want to bring cameras to capture all the magic of this very special day.

"This is a great way to introduce the special little girl in your life to the beauty and wonder of the Azalea Garden at its most spectacular time of year," said event organizer Cheryl Boyette.

Seating is limited and advance tickets are required. The cost is \$15 for adults and \$10 for children. Tickets can be purchased at the Visitors Center, 200 E. Main St. For more information, call 936-564-7351.

"I can think of nothing prettier than a bunch of little girls dressed up as princesses dancing through those beautiful azaleas," Boyette said. "Hopefully, we will make some beautiful memories that both the adults and children will cherish forever."

Queen, Grand Marshal nominations accepted

South Gate, California

Nominations are being accepted for the 43rd annual South Gate Azalea Festival Queen and Grand Marshal.

To qualify, candidates must:

- Be 50 years of age or older;
- Reside in the City of South Gate;
- Have a history of service and dedication to the community; and
- Be available to participate in Azalea Festival events as well as attend grand openings, ribbon cuttings and other special functions during the reigning year.

Nominations should be submitted to the South Gate Chamber of Commerce, 3350 Tweedy Blvd. The Queen's Coronation is March 9, 2008. The Azalea Festival runs March 8 to 16, 2008. For more information, call 323-563-9500.

Tyler presents Azalea Trail home awards

By Justin Turner—Tyler, Texas

Plans are currently underway for the 2008 Azalea and Spring Flower Trail March 14 to April 6 in Tyler. The annual celebration features eight miles of beautiful home gardens filled with colorful azaleas, dogwoods, tulips, wisteria and redbuds.

The Tyler Convention and Visitors Bureau awards prizes in four categories to homeowners along the trail. The awards are Best Display of Azaleas and Spring Flowers, Best Landscaped Yard, Best of Show (a combination of the first two) and the President's Azalea Trail Award. This year awards will be given to homeowners on both trails (Dobbs and Lindsey) so there will be two awards in each category, with only one President's Award.

Homes are judged on a number of different qualities such as unique landscape styles, floral display, garden architecture and use of garden plants. For more information, call 800-235-5712 or visit www.tylerazaleatrail.com.