

The Valdosta Daily Times

Azalea International festival

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— Valdosta Asian Cultural Association's annual festival has always had an eye on bringing the world to South Georgia. This year, it plans on taking Valdosta-Lowndes County on a trip around the globe. What has been known for several years as VACA's Asian Cultural Experience will later this week open as the Azalea International Folk Fair & Dance Competition. The festival moves from its emphasis on Asia and the East to include cultural exhibits and events that represent continents from around the world. Azalea International opens Thursday and Friday for school field trips and continues Saturday for the general public. Saturday events include the Second Annual International Folk Dance Competition which, this year, was opened to dancers from throughout the region representing national dances from around the globe.

This year introduces Power Tech — Youth Technology Creativity Contest, a phenomenon in Taiwan. Power Tech will eventually have youngsters working in teams to create moving models that compete. Many demonstrations are planned for this weekend to introduce Power Tech to local youths. The Azalea International Power Tech will be the only official Taiwanese-sponsored event in the United States, according to organizers.

The event also includes the popular, annual Valdosta State University international dinner. Azalea International started as a series of Asian dance classes in local schools and has now grown into a complex event that has brought Valdosta international attention.

Numerous corporate sponsors support the event, including The Valdosta Daily Times, UPS, Georgia Power, Pepsi, Target, Sam's Club, Park Avenue Bank. Azalea International has also won funding from the National Endowment for the Arts, Georgia Humanities Council, Georgia Council for the Arts, National Endowment of the Humanities, Southern Arts Federation and Valdosta State University.

For information, times, etc., visit the Web site (www.gainternationalfolkfair.org).

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