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Jennifer Chambers

757-282-2820

ichambers@vafest.org



2010 Norfolk NATO Festival Sets New Attendance Record

www.norfolknatofestival.org

NORFOLK, VA –Norfolk NATO Festival (*formerly known as the International Azalea Festival*) concluded its 2010 celebration of all 28 NATO member nations on Saturday May 1st with the Parade of Nations and NATO Fest in downtown Norfolk. Attendance at these two events is estimated at 17,000 guests, a new Festival record for public participation.

This year's Festival was marked by its celebration of France, this year's Most Honored Nation, and the inclusion of more than 30 French street performers, who were the highlight of the NATO Fest event in Town Point Park. These artists were invited to perform by the Embassy of France and were housed by local families during their stay, thanks to the support of the Norfolk Sister Cities Association and the Alliance Francaise, Chapitre de Grasse.

Festival highlights included:

- Visits to local schools and community centers by Festival Ambassador Captain Geraldine Ribereau, an officer in the French Air Force;
- Speech to the Hampton Roads Chapter of World Affairs Council by His Excellency Pierre Vimont, Ambassador of France to the United States;
- The contribution of more than 700 hours of community service by the Festival's new Youth Ambassador Corps, who visited more than 1,000 local students;
- More than \$15,000 in prizes and scholarships awarded to local students who participated in the Festival's education programs, including the 4th Annual Model NATO Challenge at Old Dominion University and the 23rd Annual Student Forum at Norfolk State University;
- 20 high school marching bands and 4 Virginia International Tattoo bands in the Parade of Nations;
- Floats from all 28 NATO member nations also were featured in the Parade;
- Authentic French food and wine and a selection of international beers served at NATO Fest in downtown Norfolk's Town Point Park; and
- Street performers from France, as well as local amateur and student performing arts groups, entertained audiences throughout the day at NATO Fest in Town Point Park.

For more information about the 2011 Festival and how you can participate, please visit our website at www.norfolknatofestival.org.