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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CHERRY BLOSSOM GIFT SHOP NOW OPEN, PRE-FESTIVAL EVENTS START

Macon, GA- The Cherry Blossom Festival announced in a press conference Monday, Feb. 28, the gift shop's new location at 567 Cherry Street in Downtown Macon. Artist Sandra Witty was onsite to sign the official 2011 print, "Blossoms on College." The gift shop will sale mugs, art prints, official 2011 pins, and much more. Public hours are Monday- Friday, 10 a.m.- 5 p.m. and open daily during the festival. The shop will be open until April 1, 2011. Space is compliments of David Thompson, Tony Long and Gene Dunwody, Jr.

Karen Lambert, Cherry Blossom Festival President and CEO, announced a pre-festival event happening March 4, Drink Pink. "We hope you will join us at The Macon Arts Alliance for the exciting debut of Cherry Blossom Festival signature cocktails created by local restaurants and bars," Lambert said. Macon Arts Alliance will host a textile show and paintings by J. Alan Gibson in the Gallery, with the encouragement to "Drink Pink!" Drink Pink is from 5- 8 p.m. and is a free event.

Tickets are now on sale for all Cherry Blossom Events. Purchase them at www.cherryblossom.com or through Mercer Ticket Sales at 478-301-5470. This year's festival offers favorite events like The Street Party as well as new events like Historic Macon's Decorators Showhouse, High Heels for the Cure and Camel rides in Central City Park.

Headliners for the Street Party this year are Big Boi, former member of the hip-hop group Outkast, and Jamey Johnson, award winning country singer/ songwriter know around our community for his song "Macon." Historic Macon's Decorators Showhouse is March 17-

27, 10- 4 p.m., March 18 and 19, 10- 8 p.m. and March 20 and 27 1- 4 p.m. Visitors can view the work of 15 interior designers in the historic Orange Street property. The home is a green-rehabilitated 1880's Victorian house. Tickets are \$18 in advance and \$20 at the door and can be purchased through Mercer Ticket Sales.

We are two and a half weeks from the festival, March 18- 27. A full schedule of events is online or available in brochure form. Don't miss the 29th annual Pinkest Party on Earth!

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Macon's International Cherry Blossom Festival is a non-profit 501(c) (3) organization with an economic impact of over 12 million dollars. Ninety percent of the events over the course of the ten day event are free to the public. The festival is the recipient of 2 Grand Pinnacle Awards from the International Festival and Events Association for "Best Festival in the World", 7 Shining Example Awards from the Southeast Tourism Society for "Best Festival in the Southeast", 2 Best Festival Awards by the Southeast Festivals and Events Association for the "Best Festival in the Southeast", named a Top 100 Event by the American Bus Association, and awarded Top 20 Event by the Southeast Tourism Society more than 20 times. Mark your calendars for the 29th Annual Cherry Blossom Festival scheduled for March 18-27, 2011!