A local nonprofit is looking to revitalize the Azalea Trail, which once boasted 20 miles of the popular southern plant.

Group aims to bring back Azalea Trail

By Jessica Goff
jgoff@theadvertiser.com

A new nonprofit aims to revamp a historic trail that was once a major tourist attraction in Lafayette.

Scenic Lafayette is Louisiana's first affiliate of national conservation advocacy organization Scenic America. "We are the 45th Scenic America affiliate nationwide," chairwoman Cheryl Broussard-Perret said Friday. "We are a group of citizens who have been working together for many years, we've just never had the opportunity to formalize. We do a whole lot of different things in the area in terms of beautification, but the one that we'd like to focus on is the revitalization of the Azalea Trail."

At one time, a 20-mile trail of blooming bushes was a celebrated site for locals and tourists in the springtime. It was created in the 1930s by Garden Committee of the Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce. In the 1940s, an annual parade was organized to honor the trail's seasonal opening.

Other local nonprofits, such as Project Front Yard, are doing their part to beautify the Hub City, Broussard-Perret said. The revitalization of the trail will become Scenic Lafayette's focus for 2015, she said.

"We'll be coming up with a strategy in the coming weeks," Broussard-Perret said. "We are supportive of the unified development code. We are working to make sure that it gets passed. Once that's over with, we are going to focus on the trail. We see it as a yearlong planning process. Hopefully by next spring we will have a whole lot of participation from the public in terms of planting more azaleas so that our entire city is colorful every spring."

Donations to Scenic Lafayette will go toward purchasing, planting and maintaining new bushes. For more information, visit scenic.org/lafayette, visit the organization's Facebook page or email sceniclafayette@gmail.com.