Local Azalea Trail Opens March 4

The Lafayette Azalea Trail, Celebration sponsored by the local Jaycee Chapter, has been slated for March 4-11, when the USL horticulturists forecast the azaleas will be at their fullest bloom.

Opening the celebration will be the crowning of the Azalea Queen March 4. Contestants are being sought now. They must be unmarried and be high school graduates, no later than September, 1972, and be between the ages of 18 and 25. All contestants are required to participate in all celebration functions. The pageant will be held at the USL French House.

A lawn contest is slated Feb. 28 - March 3. Judging will be based entirely on the beauty of the azaleas. The winner will be presented a silver tray at the March 4 beauty pageant.

The azalea plant is a native of East Asia and was brought to the Gulf Coast more than 200 years ago. There are over 50 distinct species and a number of botanical varieties and forms occurring in nature.

There are many varieties of azaleas in Lafayette but the Formosa variety predominates and seems to thrive only in this area. This species has a touch of lavender in it and borders on the shade of fuscia.

The Azalea Trail will be marked with street signs in the next three weeks. Hundreds of tourists are expected to cover it to see the blooming azaleas.