



COLUMBIA INTERNATIONAL

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Raj Aluri, Ed.D. Festival Director

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November 7, 2010

RICHLAND'S International Flavors on Decker

November 13, 10 am – 6 pm

2500 Decker Blvd. (former Decker Mall parking lot)

On November 13, Columbia International Festival, with support from Richland County, is hosting a free one-day family-friendly, alcohol free festival: **Richland's International Flavors on Decker**. The area surrounding Decker Boulevard is home to a large multi-national community intermixed with Richland County's local population. Many of these internationals first came to Columbia – primarily from Asia or Latin American countries –through their service with the US Army and Ft. Jackson. As they settled into the community, many purchased property and established ethnic-based businesses, including restaurants, markets and service agencies, along the boulevard. Richland County declared Decker Boulevard as its International Corridor in 2008.

This festival provides a venue for both the Midland's local and foreign-born communities to come together for a greater appreciation and understanding of the cultural diversities that enrich the flavor of the County's life. Area restaurants and food vendors will offer their home country's ethnic cuisine at the International Food Court. International Bazaar vendors will display authentic ethnic goods and packaged foods available for purchase. Attendees can explore the various cultural backgrounds and significant contributions introduced by these multi-ethnic groups at National Exhibit Booths.

Throughout the day, the artistry, beauty and music of the Midland's many cultures will be showcased on-stage by costumed ethnic dancers accompanied by traditional rhythmic melodies.

County schools, area churches, civic groups, business, service organizations, ethnic and neighborhood associations will offer information on the assistance/services they offer for community renewal and development. The festival enables personal "on-site" interaction for present business establishments to demonstrate support for this international community, develop a market for their products and services through an increased clientele, and build healthy trust-based relationships. It also presents a platform for non-resident businesses, whether ethnic or locally-based, to test the market and consider "buying in" to the revitalization of this significant area.

A parade down Decker, led by Richland County Sherriff Department's Special Decker Boulevard Unit will begin at 9 am from the Family Dollar/Santa Fe Mexican Grill parking lot at 1735 Decker Blvd. and proceed to the festival site.

Recognizing the leadership, investment and influence you hold in your office, we respectfully request the honor of your presence at the festival, whether as a participant in the opening parade, or at the 1 pm Official Welcome Ceremony. Please call to inform us of either your acceptance or regrets at your earliest convenience. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Raj Aluri, Ed. D.
Festival Director