For Immediate Release

Japanese Fall Festival Sept. 10 - 12

The Springfield Sister Cities Association, with support from the Springfield-Greene County Park Board, will host its 15th Japanese Fall Festival Friday, Sept. 10 through Sunday, Sept. 12 in the Mizumoto Japanese Stroll Garden at Nathanael Greene/Close Memorial Park, 2400 S. Scenic Ave., with special performances by traditional Japanese performers from Springfield’s sister city of Isesaki, Japan and a wide array of other activities and performances.

The three-day festival runs from 5:30 – 10 p.m., Friday night, and 11 a.m. – 10 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday. Admission is $5 for adults; $3 for kids 12 and younger; and toddlers two years of age and under are free.

This year’s highlights include:

- Opening ceremonies on Friday night with a children’s parade comprised of hundreds of local Kindergarten-through-sixth grade elementary students, who were invited as ambassadors to represent their classes from every Springfield public elementary school;
- Isesaki, Japan guests perform tea ceremonies, Ikebani (traditional Japanese flower arranging) and traditional Japanese dance onstage;
- Kuniko Yamamoto, a traditional Japanese storyteller who uses illusions, masks and costumes to tell her stories. She can be also be seen regularly at Walt Disney World;
- Taiko drumming group Osuwa Taiko, from St. Louis;
- Springfield Ballet will perform Bushido (ballet dance choreographed to traditional Japanese music);
- Traditional Japanese top spinner Hiroshi Tada, from St. Louis;
- Local martial artists groups, including those with sword demonstrations; and
- Local musical groups who have traveled to Japan in the past, or who will travel to Japan in 2011.

The festival also hosts daily tea ceremonies in the lakeside tea house, nightly candlelight strolls through the garden, hands-on activities for children, presentations by local performers, authentic Japanese food and regional artisans and merchants. A large tent top market features Japanese souvenirs and apparel for sale, with all proceeds benefiting SSCA.

For more information, media contact: Cindy Jobe, Festival Coordinator, 417-891-1191.