

Ondo to develop Idanre with Mare festival

Written by Yinka Oladoyinbo, Tribune.

The Ondo State government has expressed its commitment to the development of tourism sector of the economy as arrangements have reached advanced stage for the staging of the annual Mare festival in Idanre. Apart from this, the government has also said the winner of the first edition of the mountain climbing competition during the Mare festival, Sunday Akinwunmi, would be travelling to some Asian countries preparatory to the hosting of the 2011 edition of the festival.

The Commissioner for Culture and Tourism, Deji Falae, who said this in Akure, said the annual festival was designed to aid tourism and economic base of the state. According to him, the state government had already secured traveling papers for Akinwunmi and his father to travel to Dubai and meet with international mountain climbers.

He said the boy had been benefiting from the scholarship pledged by the state governor, Dr. Olusegun Mimiko, while the overseas trip was aimed at exposing him to the outside world and to also encourage other youths to engage in developmental activities.

The commissioner stated that the festival which comes up between December 15 and 17, was put together by the state to further open the tourism potentials that were abound and to encourage the youths of the state. Falae said that this year's edition would be unique and would attract world attention as international climbers across the world would be witnessing this year's edition. He also said notable artistes across the country had been contacted and had shown interest to participate in the festival. During last year's edition, no fewer than 35 school children from age ten and above were trained in the modern techniques and art of mountaineering by a team of mountain climbers from Spain.

The training of the young mountain climbers which was described by some of the beneficiaries as an eye-opener in mountaineering took place on some of the several hills dotting the ancient Idanre town for three days. Dr Mimiko who presided over the three-day festival told the participants that the government was committed to making Idanre a cynosure of every eyes around the globe through the continued promotion of the natural tourism endowments of Idanre Hills. He said "As you all know, tourism has become one of the fastest growing economic sector in both the developed and the developing nations of the world. Today no country can afford to neglect tourism. Ondo State is fortunate to be blessed in terms of tourism endowment of which Idanre Hills is one. "Mare festival" was therefore conceived as an annual cultural event to promote tourism.

"Idanre Hills is an old heritage site with a peculiar landscape. In the pursuit of the 12-point agenda of my government, we are determined to develop Idanre Hills as a pilot project to launch Ondo State into the global tourism market," he said.