Bilingual campaign continues at steady pace in Louisiana area

The campaign for bilingualism in Louisiana continues at a steady pace. Journalists from throughout the French-speaking world will hold the first U.S. meeting of their international association in Louisiana March 22-27 under the auspices of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana.

CODOFIL Chairman James Domengeaux announced that Louisiana would host over 150 newspaper editors, television and radio news directors, reporters and other media representatives from a dozen countries. They are members of the International Association of French-speaking Journalists that includes representation from both the print and broadcast media. The association is the professional organization for approximately 8,000 journalists.

During their stay in Louisiana they will visit area towns, dine with French-speaking families and attend a number of French language social and cultural events including an Acadia (Cajun) music festival. The public is invited to the festival and other convention activities.

“This event, held in a different French-speaking area of the world each year, engenders a continuous flow of feature articles and programs in the years following the convention,” Domengeaux said. “This means that Louisiana will be written about in newspapers and magazines and talked about on radio and television in a dozen countries for years to come.”

“T"he convention will give Louisiana added recognition in its endeavor to save, develop and expand bilingualism through increased use of French, a language native to this Deep South state, and still spoken or understood by a third of its close to four million residents,” the CODOFIL chairman added.

Scheduled to arrive aboard an Air France charter flight from Paris Thursday, March 21, the delegation will be hosted in Lafayette at a late evening reception at the Sheraton Town House Motel.

The weeklong convention calls for business sessions in the morning and area visits and interviews in the afternoons. Griffin Hall Auditorium on the USL campus will be headquarters for the deliberations of the association and a nearby classroom is being converted into a press room for filing stories about Louisiana around the world.

Native French-speaking Louisianans will participate in convention affairs.

The inaugural meeting is slated for 11 a.m. Friday, March 22 in the auditorium and after the association president gives the convention to order French-speaking Louisiana officials and journalists will join Domengeaux in extending a welcome. Luncheon is to be held at Jacobs Restaurant in Lafayette.

At 3:30 p.m. Friday association members will leave for New Iberia for visits to tourist attractions there and a 7 p.m. crawfish boil in the Sugar Cane Festival Building in City Park. Mrs. Jackie Voorhies, president of the Iberia CODOFIL chapter and former state senator Sam Broussard will coordinate Iberia activities.

Saturday's agenda calls for a workshop and panel discussions in Griffin Hall beginning at 9:30 a.m. Lafayette Representative Allen Bares will be joined by Aaron Flegance, representing the St. Martin School system, in extending French greetings.

Luncheon will be held in the Veterans Hall in Breaux Bridge. A special program includes a discussion by Harris Periou on the history of the Acadians in Louisiana, and a report on the crawfish industry by Elmer Naquin. Miss Jeanne Castille will direct entertainment that includes Cajun and Creole songs by a student group. Later Saturday the journalists will study old courthouse records and visit other attractions in St. Martinville.

Following a weekend of visits in the homes of area French-speaking residents, fishing trips and attendance at country horse racing and other attractions, association members will journey to Ville Platte on Monday, the Houma-Thibodaux area on Wednesday and Thursday and then depart Golden Meadow Thursday for New Orleans.

Sen. John A. Tassin, Paul Tate and Catherine Prudhomme of Evangeline Parish, Mrs. Audrey George of Houma, Dean Elmo Auhtement of Thibodaux and James Beuz of New Orleans are coordinators for wide-ranging activities in their respective areas. State Senator Edgar G. Mouton, chairman of the Senate Education Committee, is honorary chairman of the conclave.

Francophony in Louisiana and the French press of the world will be explored as general themes of the convention.