MARKSVILLE — The home of Louisiana’s French speaking Gov. Edwin Edwards over the weekend set the stage for the renaissance of the French language in the heritage rich parish (county) of Avoyelles.

A standing room only crowd, meeting in the local courthouse under the chairmanship of Judge Earl Edwards, founded the 14th local chapter of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), a state agency created by unanimous vote of the 1968 legislature to preserve, develop and expand the French language in this deep south state.

Domengeaux Speaks

“The United States will soon be forced to abandon its linguistic provincialism if this great nation does not want to become isolated in this fast shrinking world of instant communications,” CODOFIL Chairman and former Congressman James Domengeaux said.

He said Louisiana has an existing base of over one million of its population still speaking or understanding French on which to build a practical bilingualism in the State within the next 20 years.

“But if we don’t get to it right now the language within 10 years will be lost forever to Louisiana,” Domengeaux said.

Priority Subject

The state’s school boards have to put the teaching of French on the same footing as other priority subjects for the present bilingual awakening to give the desired results, he said.

Domengeaux said that in September at least another 150 elementary teaching assistants from France would join the 180 already in Louisiana besides the intensive training of native teachers, 300 of which would be studying in France and Quebec this summer.

Officer selected at the Avoyelles Parish Chapter meeting of CODOFIL were: president, Wayne Laborde; vice president, Mrs. Mae Cappel; secretary, Mrs. Blanch Swann; and treasurer, Steven Ducote.