Lafayette's first City Hall, which has been renovated for use by CODOFIL, was dedicated yesterday afternoon in the French and English languages — with some help from Gov. Dave Treen.

Ceremonies took place in front of the building, located across Main Street from the parish courthouse, under cloudy skies that threatened rain. The street was blocked off for the dedication and will be again tomorrow for an open house and fais do-do.

Treen expressed gratitude to the Council on the Development of French in Louisiana for its "steadfast dedication" to enhancing and preserving the French language in Louisiana.

Constitution Protects

"I do indeed support CODOFIL and the French language movement," Treen told a small crowd that had gathered in the street. He noted that Louisiana's Constitution provides for the right of citizens to preserve and protect their cultural heritage.

Treen was whisked to the ceremonies after dedicating the new University Medical Center.

The governor added that he is "excited" about scholarships and student exchange programs with French-speaking countries which promote the interest and growth of the French language in Louisiana.

James Domengeaux, director of CODOFIL, spoke in French and English, stating that the organization has been successful in efforts to improve the image of French-speaking people in the state.

Pride Increases

"We have brought back pride to this language," he said. In the past, speaking French was often associated with poverty. But today, he continued, "They're proud to speak the language."

CODOFIL has helped to bring French back "to a rich and deserving people," Domengeaux added.

Sen. Cecil Picard addressed the group in French. Also in attendance were Mayor Dud Lastrapes, Rep. Ron Gomez, Sen. Allen Bares, several city councilmen and many other city and state officials.

The building will be open for tours tomorrow at 4:30 p.m., featuring a fais-do-do with Cajun music by Beausoleil. The general public is invited to attend the ceremony.

The old city hall was originally built in 1898 as the old Bank of Lafayette. In 1906, the City of Lafayette bought the building for $4,500 and it became Lafayette's first City Hall. Since that time, it has been used as a public library, Civil Defense Office, and Boy Scout office.

OPENING THE DOORS — The doors of the new CODOFIL offices to be housed in Lafayette's first City Hall were opened yesterday by Gov. Dave Treen. The dedication ceremonies were conducted in English and French, honoring the area's French culture. (Staff photo by Ross Heard)