Once more with feeling

CODOFIL must fight for its life yet again

Mike Hasten
State Editor

BATON ROUGE — While the director of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana is in France and Belgium recruiting teachers to come to Louisiana, the Foster administration's proposed budget threatens to wipe out the agency.

State funding for CODOFIL, which is largely responsible for the resurgence of the Acadian culture in Louisiana, is in a section of the budget labeled "below the line." Items in that category would be eliminated if the Legislature doesn't raise taxes.

Gov. Mike Foster's proposed budget for the 2000-01 fiscal year would appropriate $308,000 but only if additional funds are found. The agency received $317,000 in the current year's budget to fund administrative costs, including the salaries of five employees.

Lafayette Rep. Jerry LeBlanc, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee that will have the first shot at reshaping the administration budget, says he believes a concerted effort will be made to save CODOFIL.

"I think the delegation from South Louisiana is going to have to, particularly this year, re-state the case as to why CODOFIL is important and why we have to continue to fund it," LeBlanc said in an interview. "If we don't, it's going to be a loss of heritage."

Alan Brown, communications director for the agency, said the administration has not notified CODOFIL of its funding status. "We had been assured by the state that we are in their plans for next year," he said.

CODOFIL, once funded by the state at more than $1 million, has continued to be reduced over the years. It now relies on outside sources, even foreign countries, for support.

"It's amazing that CODOFIL is more appreciated in Paris than it is in Baton Rouge," Brown said. "It's amazing that the country of Belgium, which

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