Cajun Country will become tourist bonanza for Acadiana

Acadiana is making a start to take the lead in the state’s pursuit of a one billion dollar a year tourist business.

Considerable progress will be required to push the present $600 million-plus Louisiana tourist business to one billion dollars by 1975.

Acadiana, blessed with natural assets and plant for man-made attractions, especially Cajun Country, may very well take the lead in Louisiana tourism promotion. The Louisiana Tourist Commission, involved in promoting tourism in Louisiana like any other business, is not to capture each year’s larger and larger percentage of the leisure-time finds for this state’s tourist industry. In that connection, it is pushing a variety of promotional activities with Acadiana figuring prominently in its plans.

Acadiana is a “natural” as a tourist attraction. Lon Conner, advertising and publicity director for the state commission, confirms this area’s importance in commission plans.

“Whenever the choice is with us,” Conner said, “we always include Acadiana among other sections of the state for obvious reasons—the uniqueness of Acadian culture, the splendor of attractions of the Acadian country (man-made and natural), the historic aspects of Acadiana, the unique food, the colorful festivals, the folkloric aspects of Acadiana, the Creole legend, and many other attractions.”

To capitalize on the tourist potential of this area, a group of citizens have formed a corporation, “Cajun Country,” which will be a recreation park based on the Acadian theme.

The promoters further intend to participate in an area-wide program to develop natural and historical points of interest. This combination will present a unified program to attract tourists to a two or three day itinerary.

Cajun Country will illustrate the entire colorful and exciting story of the Cajuns. It will capitalize on the natural resources of Acadiana—its man-made attractions, its scenic bayous and swamps, its Acadian traditions continued by present-day Acadians, and the historical remains of buildings dating from an early era.

The success of this venture will largely depend upon the natural hospitality of the Cajun people, which has been expressed in ballad and story.

Tourism and Louisiana should be synonymous terms. It is said, and now is the time to tell the world about the lure of Louisiana.

Tourist experts say Acadiana has enough selling points to bring tourists streaming, but why aren’t they coming? Because Acadiana, they answer, have failed to promote the attractiveness of its bayous and traditional settlements. Tourists must be told of these attractions.

Among other benefits expected to accrue from Cajun Country, the developers said there will be about 250,000 tourists during each four-month season. This influx will provide employment for about 200 persons, most of them college students.

Included in the huge attraction will be an authentic replica of an Acadian village dating back to the 1800’s. Cajun arts and crafts, hanged down from generation to generation, will be exhibited.

Here also the visitors will view the social life of the Cajuns of 1800, including the “fan-do-da,” French music and folklore.

A charming cruise through a Louisiana swamp will offer tourists a scenic panorama of typical Louisiana wildlife. In the 127-acre swamp playground there will be an authentic replica of an old time French settlement, which will turn back the clock to a long-gone era of spinning and weaving, of syrup making and horseback riding. The old-time bakery, candle factory and other trades and crafts of the early Acadians will help provide the illusion of antiquity and history.

Also a part of the village will be La Maison Francaise, the Hospitality House, L’ecole, L’eglise, the Post Office, Kiddlyland, and the Pralines Candy Kitchen.

Visitors will see home industries at work, such as moss cleaning and curing and mud mixing for construction.

The lore and adventures of one of the world’s best known pirates, Jean Lafitte, will be depicted on Jean Lafitte Island. The Indian culture and contributions to the area will not be neglected.

The charming and interesting ecology of the area on exhibit include Cajun land wildlife, such as alligators, nutria, pelicans, cranes, raccoons, and other animals and birds native to Louisiana or that migrate here for the winter.

Cajun Country will be within a hop-skip-and jump of some of the country’s finest salt and fresh water fishing. Among other enticements for sportsmen will be Evangeline Downs race track and major sports centers in New Orleans and Houston.

Truly, Acadiana offers something for every member of the family.

To be seen, Acadiana must first be heard, tourist experts point out. Tourists must be enticed to “come see” our unique bayous, man-made oaks, salt-and-sodium plantations, and quaint settlements. They must be urged to participate in an experience of a lifetime—one that is only possible in Acadiana.