Cajundome catalyst for economic growth

Cajundome officials say they expect the soon-to-open Cajundome to serve as a catalyst for economic gain throughout the Acadiana area. The $60 million facility will open Nov. 10.

A Cajundome spokesman said effective programming at the Cajundome will result in national exposure for the area to induce new business and tourism interests. Also, the programs will generate a substantial economic impact on the community, the spokesman said.

For instance, a three-week Grand Opening Series intended to illustrate the Cajundome’s versatility, is expected to attract nearly 90,000 people to the civic center, according to the spokesman.

Cajundome officials estimate those 90,000 people will spend in excess of $1.1 million at Cajundome cash registers for tickets, parking, food, beverages and souvenirs. The promoter will generate another $200,000 in direct event expenses, including advertising, supplies, transportation, food and recreation, the spokesman said.

Also included is about $50,000 in part-time employment for parking attendants, security, patron services, ticket sellers, stagehands, food and beverage vendors and a host of jobs unique to special event productions. These positions are filled primarily with students and local civic groups to create scholarship and fund-raising benefits, the spokesman said.

A substantial indirect economic impact will also be realized, officials estimate. They say Cajundome patrons are likely to spend an average of $50 a person on incidentals, such as flowers, supper to an event or a late-night snack with drinks after, limousine rental or a tank of gas and lodging. This spending generates another turnover of $4.5 million in the local economy, the spokesman said.

The combined total of projected economic impact of the initial three weeks of events exceeds $5.8 million, the spokesman said. That will generate $116,000 new tax dollars to the city, $58,000 to the School Board and $232,000 to the state.

The Cajundome will also accommodate state and regional conventions when possible.

The Lafayette Convention and Visitors Commission reports that the national average convention delegate spends $144 per day. Using a conservative $100 per delegate day in the Southeast, a 2,000-delegate convention is in town for three days would result in an economic impact of $600,000. This generates another $12,000 in city tax and $6,000 in School Board tax, the spokesman said.

Studies indicate these dollars are "rolled over" extensively in a community, therefore would have to be multiplied several times to truly measure the full economic impact to the community, the spokesman added.