Better than projected."
That was the phrase used repeatedly by Cajundome officials Wednesday to describe the civic center’s status one month short of its first anniversary.

"Cajundome operators were looking at a $332,000 year-to-date deficit, $340,000 figure in generated tax revenues and 458,265 attendance mark as of Sept. 30."

The numbers are those most recently available and still to be rounded out by October activity for a full fiscal year picture.

Members of the Cajundome-Auditorium Management Board said they are generally pleased with the fact that the deficit is not only lower than a once anticipated $500,000 loss, but also surpassed by what the facility has put back into the community.

Total generated taxes brought an additional $49,557 to the School Board, $98,142 to the City and $192,510 to the state as of Sept. 30, as Cajundome financial report shows.

Seven percent in taxes is applied to tickets, parking, concessions, merchandise and catering.

Director Mike Barber said the lower-than-expected deficit is due in part to the City administration’s ordering budget cuts in all City departments, including the Cajundome.

But utility costs for the civic center are also significantly below initial projections, board member Louis Mann noted.

Utilities cost $225,738 as of last month’s end, according to the report. Very early projections by Barber and others were that first-year billings would approach $450,000.

The financial report showed $1.2 million in actual revenues as of Sept. 30, compared to $1.3 million in actual operating expenses for the same time.

The loss before figuring utilities came to $119,158 and, with utilities, to $344,896.

"The bottom-line deficit was lowered to $332,006 because of 7 percent in taxes applied."

A separate recap of events held during the Cajundome’s first 11 months shows 161 functions hosted. Those included concerts, basketball games, banquets and meetings, family shows, university commencements and more.

Gross tickets sales came in at $3.5 million, while suiteholders paid $5,587 in tickets. Catering drew $146,143; concessions, $751,551; merchandise, $447,402; parking, $89,757; and $1-per-ticket computer fees, $58,889.

Advertising panels raised another $104,195 and $29,450 was logged from lease of seven private suites.

The Cajundome expects to get its 500,000th visitor by a Nov. 16 Statler Brothers concert, Audience Development Manager Lisa Prejean said.

In other action Wednesday, the board heard reports on Cajundome marketing efforts and equipment put out on bid.