Cajundome manager resigns
By Nissa Darbonne
Staff Writer

Cajundome Commission members may be searching for a new dome manager soon if it accepts the current manager’s Wednesday resignation.

The manager, Mike Noah, delivered his letter of resignation Tuesday to commission chair Bill Rucks III. It was dated Monday.

Rucks, who was out-of-town Tuesday, opened it Wednesday morning.

“I’m sorry to see him go,” Rucks responded.

Noah did not return calls for comment.

He wrote to Rucks, “It is unfortunate that circumstances lead me to leave such a wonderful organization, but my own style of management would not be constructive to the facility where stringent day-to-day oversight of operations could, in my opinion, hinder its success.”

He said his letter is “in lieu of a
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public statement on my part" and asked Rucks to make the announcement to other commission members.

Noah's $60,000 annual contract with the commission expires May 31. He wrote to Rucks that he would remain at the helm until then and assist in transition.

Rucks said the commission would rely on the dome's assistant manager, Greg Davis, after May 31 if a new manager is not selected yet.

Davis was acting dome director prior to Noah's hiring in the summer of 1988.

"We'll have a smooth transition," Rucks said. "We'll kind of take it slow and, above all, not panic."

Noah reportedly has two other job offers, one in Atlanta, which is hosting the 1996 Summer Olympics. A source said Noah plans to take the offer in Atlanta.

Noah's resignation is as surprising as his five years of service, said Mario Mamalakis, a commission member.

"I really didn't think he would stay with us this long," Mamalakis said.

Noah was called a "hot shot" among facility managers and a "hired gun," trouble-shooting problems and networking contacts to boost facility use.

Rucks said, "I'm very disappointed that Mike has sought to resign. In my opinion, he was a great-plus addition to the building. He came in at a time when we were in pretty dire need. We weren't meeting our budget, and we weren't really performing like the building is capable of."

"He came in with his experience and expertise and led us out," Rucks said.

Noah reduced the dome's annual operating deficit from $500,000 and more to approximately $250,000 within two years of taking over management. He also developed a regular building maintenance and capital improvements schedule.

He recently proposed creating a private corporation to run the facility to increase the dome's profit. He would own the corporation, according to his proposal. The commission scheduled a meeting to hear it in January, but cancelled it.

Cajundome Commission members had held a regular meeting Monday afternoon. Members said nothing irregular occurred at the Monday meeting.

Mayor Kenny Bowen, a commission member, had asked last month that a system be created to supervise Noah's negotiation of contracts with users of the facility.

Rucks had responded that most contracts have to be negotiated quickly or the host won't bring the act to Lafayette, moving on to where managers can answer fast.

He told Bowen he would check into the matter, however, and see if an after-the-fact oversight system can be developed.

Noah is the dome's fourth manager since it opened in the fall of 1985. The first manager, Mike Barber, resigned. The second manager was also the dome's concessionaire. Davis was its third manager.

Prior to joining the dome's staff in 1988, Noah, now 43, was vice president and general manager of Facility Management of New York, which operated the Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Uniondale, N.Y.

He was one of 37 applicants for the Cajundome job.