
Cajundome plans exhibition hall

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The Cajundome will begin earning an extra $500,000 or more each year from the state to pay for building an exhibition hall.

The hall is to be an expansion of the Cajundome and to be used by the Cajundome for non-arena events, such as conventions and craft shows. The plan’s point is to free Cajundome dates for more concerts and other events that usually require using an arena.

Cajundome Commission members voted Tuesday to set up the exhibition hall project, now that the state Legislature has agreed to the funding. USL’s president, Dr. Ray Authement, is chairing the exhibition hall committee. The first check from the state is expected after Oct. 1.

Plans are to borrow the money that is needed to build the exhibition hall and use the annual state funding to repay the loan.

The state funding is based on hotel and motel sales in Lafayette Parish. It is one-fourth of what the state earns on its four-cent tax on lodging bills.

For example, the state earns, and usually keeps, all $4 on a $100 motel bill. Under the diversion plan, the state is giving to the Cajundome $1 of the $4.

Spending on lodging in Lafayette Parish has grown to $29.7 million in 1994 from $27.8 million in 1993 and $18.8 million in 1989. Off the spending in 1994, for example, the state earned $1.2 million, with its four-cent sales tax.

Lafayette Parish’s 28 hotels and motels have a total 3,350 rooms.

Cajundome Commission members recognized state Rep. Jerry Luke LeBlanc of Lafayette with a plaque at the commission’s meeting Tuesday. LeBlanc initiated the diversion program and won Legislature support of it.