
Aging facility will celebrate tonight with a concert by Elton John

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If the Cajundome had never been built, the UL basketball team might still be playing in Blackham Coliseum, hundreds of high school and UL students would have graduated elsewhere, and the thousands who attended events featuring Mother Teresa, Elton John, Cher and Sesame Street might never have enjoyed those experiences.

The Cajundome turns 25 years old today and is celebrating by bringing back one of the area’s favorite entertainers, Elton John, whose concert this evening — his third in Lafayette — is sold out.

A person may still be young at 25, but not a facility that has seen more than 14 million visitors and was home for a month to more than 17,000 people displaced after hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

The Cajundome needs a face-lift


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at a time when neither the city nor the state has the $30 million or $40 million investment needed to sustain the facility over the next 25 years at a standard acceptable to the public, Director Greg Davis said.

In addition to the lack of capital funding, the Cajundome is facing rising operational costs. Last fiscal year, Lafayette Consolidated Government had to boost its annual operating allotment to the Cajundome to $750,000 from $500,000.

Some have complained that the Cajundome doesn't attract top concerts often enough, tonight's sold-out Elton John concert among the exceptions. But publicly owned facilities such as the Cajundome in markets the size of Lafayette have trouble attracting top acts at ticket prices the public is willing to pay.

So is the Cajundome fulfilling the purpose for which it was built and should LCG continue to pump operating and capital improvement money into a facility it doesn't even own?

Kern Michael Schlabach

"There is no tragedy in life like the death of a child. Things never get back to what they had been."

President Dwight D. Eisenhower

Not a day goes by that we don't think about you, Kern. We are grateful for the Legacy you left us in Madeline and Eden.

Love,
Mom & Dad, Kyle, Cory, Colbi, Codi, Caitlyn, Cathy & Cassandra and their families, and your children Maddie & Eden.

See photo galleries at theadvertiser.com.