Lafayette civic center facing money problems

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LAFAYETTE — The new civic center here is ahead of schedule, and at the current rate of progress it should be complete before its deadline of July 1985, said Al Thibert, director of Lafayette's Community Affairs Department.

Operating funds for the Cajundome haven't been "identified," Thierry said, but the city administration will decide what source will be used to generate the necessary funds.

Thierry said ideal weather has aided construction since groundbreaking in January 1982.

The $50 million Cajundome has been enclosed with the completion of the roof's first layer, he said. Next, the roof must be coated with a layer of lightweight concrete, followed by a layer of a rubberized material, he said.

Thierry said another reason for the progress has been the monthly meetings held between the contractor, Blount Brothers Corp. of Montgomery, Ala., and the subcontractors.

The city's 1984 budget, approved in October, included $1 million for the civic center's furnishings.

The City Council agreed last month to hire a management consultant from Atlanta, Ga., who will advise the city on the civic center's needs, including an operating budget.

Thierry said the Cajundome has enough money for completion, but the source for operating funds has yet to be chosen, although it is known that a new revenue source has to be found.

"The existing budget is not sufficient to carry the load of that facility," he said. "We will be seeking additional revenue for operation."

There are several possibilities, he said, including a sales tax and an increase of the hotel-motel tax.

"We've not yet identified the option we'll be pursuing," he said. "There are a number of options that can be utilized."

He is confident the Cajundome will have enough money to operate once the facility's doors are opened for business.

"I can't foresee the building sitting idle," he said.