Continuing French Movement To Aid Acadiana Development

James Domengeaux, chairman of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL), says the continuing French movement will do more for tourism in this state by accident than the state Tourist Commission will do on purpose.

The Lafayette attorney does not mean the statement to be a criticism of the Tourist Commission. He is just very optimistic about the potential of the French movement CODOFIL is nurturing.

Imagine Lafayette and the rest of Acadiana having a pool of diplomats and foreign representatives from nearly three dozen nations. Picture Acadiana and the rest of the state as tourist havens for hundreds of thousands of people from more than 30 French-speaking nations around the globe.

Cultural Example

How about the establishment of Louisiana as a prime example of cultural attainment for the rest of the U.S. and the world?

Well, these are just a few of the long range goals of CODOFIL.

Almost daily, newspapers, radio and television stations all across the world (in France in particular) carry stories about the French movement in Louisiana.

"The French national television network will do a series of three hour-long specials on the history of Louisiana soon," Domengeaux said.

Fontenot of Abbeville has taken part in numerous live radio programs (via satellite) in Paris.

French Interested

"The French government and the French people are very much interested in the movement here," Domengeaux said. "In fact, last year the French government contributed $420,000 to the movement in the form of services, grants, scholarships and personnel."

In recent months, Acadiana has served as host to the International Convention of the French-Speaking Americas (held in Lafayette). Several times high ranking officials of the French and Canadian governments have visited Acadiana.

"These things bring international attention to the French movement in Louisiana," Domengeaux noted.

During the next year Lafayette will likely play host to the International Convention of French-Speaking Newspapers (March or April 1974) and New Orleans will be the site of the French Speaking Teachers Convention in the spring of '74. The teachers' meet will draw about 1,000 delegates from all over the world.

And CODOFIL plans to get into the space age.

Domengeaux explained that CODOFIL is working through the Louisiana congressional delegation to get space satellites for educational television programs to promote the French language in Louisiana schools.

This means teachers from France for the coming school year," Domengeaux said.

Some $1,400,000 in Education Department funds will be used for that purpose next year.

Special Training

"The most important part of this is that some of the money plus some money from the federal government, will be used to give Louisiana teachers who speak French special training at USL and other colleges and universities so they can use French when teaching such subjects as physical education, health and other enrichment programs," Domengeaux noted.

And CODOFIL is seeking more money to obtain additional teachers from France for the coming school year," Domengeaux said.

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