Gov. Edwin Edwards emphasizes a point during his address to the Legislature Monday

**EWE earmarks education funds**

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Gov. Edwin Edwards released an executive budget Monday with little extra money available but with promises that 80 percent of the additional funds will go to education.

Edwards told lawmakers on the first day of the legislative session that of an extra $142 million budgeted for the 1987-88 fiscal year, “almost 80 percent is targeted toward education.”

Edwards and the Legislature attempted to reach a balanced budget this year through the use of more than $300 million in one-time revenues, reductions in spending and extending a sales tax during a special session last December and a series of cuts made by the governor through executive orders throughout the year.

On the opening day of the session, Rep. Raymond Laborde, D-Marksville, filed the general appropriations bill (HB325), laying out the spending plan for general operations of government in 1987-88.

Laborde is chairman of the House Appropriations Committee and an administration floor leader. He will guide the bill through hearings in his committee and in debate by the 105-member House of Representatives.

The money bill filed on Monday will go through a series of changes by both the House and Senate.

Administration Budget Officer Ralph Perlman has already informed House and Senate members that the bill fails to meet some so-called “unmet needs” desired by the Edwards administration.

Perlman said Monday there are also some differences in budget recommendations contained in the twovolume, detailed executive budget and the 105-page appropriations bill.

The governor proposes a $6.7 billion

**Budget**

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total budget, with $3.95 billion of state revenues available for financing the operations of government. The federal government is expected to provide $1.6 billion, the next largest portion of total revenues.

The governor’s budget is based on expected revenues $356 million higher than projections from the Legislative Fiscal Office. Edwards acknowledged Monday some uncertainty in reaching his projections.

State government had a deficit of more than $500 million at the end of the last fiscal year, June 30, 1986, and faces a potential deficit of as much as $127 million in the current fiscal year, legislative financial advisers say.

Amidst these financial questions, Edwards is proposing full funding of the program for financing the public schools.

The budget contains $975.9 million for the minimum foundation program, cut $45 million by the Legislature last summer and reduced $46.6 million by the governor last December. Edwards recently restored the cut he made with funds generated through the refinancing of state debt.

A reduced budget is scheduled for LSU and its School of Veterinary Medicine. The executive budget shows LSU budgeted $163.4 million this year and $160.7 million next year, based on the appropriation bill figures.

The LSU Ag Center, budgeted $60.9 million this year, is appropriated $61.8 million for 1987-88; the Paul M. Hebert Law Center, $7.4 million this year and $7.5 million next year.

Southern University in Baton Rouge, budgeted $43.7 million this year, is appropriated $45 million next year, according to HB325.

For other area universities – Nicholls State University in Thibodaux, $23.6 million this year, $23.5 million next year; Southeastern in Hammond, $27.4 million this year, $27.5 million next year; Southwestern in Lafayette, $51.6 million this year, $52.6 million next year.