Domemakes $434,295 off ice in 3 months

Cajundome Commission members are ready to have an architect draft a program for an exhibition hall addition to the 10-year-old facility.

A “program” is a written description of what is needed in a building. The architect who is designing a building uses a program in designing it.

State officials agreed last year to pay for the addition, up to $9 million. The exhibition hall is to be used for Cajundome events that are using arena space now, such as trade shows. It will free arena space for concerts and other arena activities.

Commission members voted Monday to call for proposals from local architects on drafting the program, which is estimated to cost up to $60,000.

Pat LeBlanc, the commission’s chairman, noted that the dome has now profited $434,300 in the first three months of ice hockey and other ice events.

Greg Davis, the dome’s manager, delivered the three-month fiscal report Monday to Cajundome Commission members. The report is for Nov. 1 through Jan. 31. Use of a new ice rink in the dome began in November. The first home ice hockey game was held Dec. 5.

The profits off ice events is already 25 percent of what is needed to pay for the ice rink and related improvements and equipment, noted Pat LeBlanc, the commission’s chairman.

The IceGators have sold more than 250,000 tickets now for its first 26 home games with nine more home games left in the season. Attendance averages 9,678 per game. Fourteen games have sold out. A sell-out is 11,942 seats.

Meanwhile, several of the dome’s public ice skating sessions have sold out as well, with skaters using arena space now, such as trade shows. It will free arena space for concerts and other arena activities.

Commission members voted Monday to call for proposals from local architects on drafting the program, which is estimated to cost up to $60,000.

Pat LeBlanc, commission chairman and a local architect, suggested that only $15,000 to $20,000 be paid for the plans. The hall will consist mostly of a large open space, LeBlanc said, so the job won’t be very complicated.

LeBlanc also suggested that a program be developed now “so we can go ahead and begin to nail down the sizes,” prices and other details.

So far, it is not known yet what size the hall will be, its cost or where on Cajundome grounds it will be located. A Cajundome committee and the architect who designs the building are to determine that.

USL President Ray Authement, who is a commission member, said, “The facility won’t be over $9 million because we won’t be able to finance it.”

The commission may hire an architect next month to draft the program. The state is expected to hire an architect to design the building, using the program, in September or October.