Foundation to aid CODOFIL

By CALVIN LEAR
Staff writer

CODOFIL enthusiasts, seeking to change the organization's depressed financial picture, are taking matters into their own hands by trying to raise $500,000 for the newly created Foundation CODOFIL.

CODOFIL is an acronym for Council for the Development of French in Louisiana, a state-funded agency that supports the survival of the French language and culture in the Bayou State.

Members of Les Amis du CODOFIL, a statewide private support network for the agency, will hold their first annual banquet Jan. 29 at the Cajundome.

Gov.-elect Buddy Roemer will be the keynote speaker at the banquet, which will signal the kick off of the fund-raising effort. Prospective president of the state Senate, Allen Barres of Lafayette will serve as bi-lingual master of ceremonies, and the Cajun band Louisiana Aces will perform. Also, Francois Leveillee' of Quebec will perform. The soft rock musician is currently touring the United States.

Foundation CODOFIL will attempt to restore the 45 percent in budget the agency has suffered since the state's economic slide began in 1981, said CODOFIL's Philippe Gustin. The result has been a French-support agency that is severely hampered financially.

"CODOFIL's existance is not threatened," Gustin said. "It enjoys popular political support," he added. Gustin included the governor-elect among the supporters.

The foundation money will help CODOFIL fund services such as hiring French teachers and granting scholarships for students to study in French-speaking countries, Gustin said.

He said it will hopefully raise sufficient funds to establish an endowment, and it will operate as a private, non-profit entity.

Dr. William Arceneaux, the former head of the State Board of Regents, will serve as president of Foundation CODOFIL.

"Despite herculean efforts by many people, particularly (Lafayette's) James Domengeaux, founder and chairman of CODOFIL, the organization has not been adequately funded by the State of Louisiana," Arceneaux said.

In addition to the foundation announcement, the banquet will also launch a statewide and year-long celebration of CODOFIL's 20th anniversary. It was established in 1968 during the administration of Gov. John McKeithen.

Gustin said tickets are selling fast, going for $100 per couple.