Gov. Buddy Roemer invites education summit to Louisiana

By The Associated Press

Gov. Buddy Roemer invited President Bush on Thursday to bring a meeting on education issues with the nation's governors to Louisiana.

During an address to the National Governors Association in Chicago last month, Bush asked for a summit with the states' chief executives. Although the meeting is set for Sept. 27-28, no site has been chosen.

In a letter to the White House, Roemer said, "We would welcome the chance to showplace our wonderful culture, our present educational efforts and our future plans."

The governor followed the letter up with a telephone call to Bush's staff, said Steve Cochran, Roemer's executive secretary.

Cochran, in a telephone interview, said the president's staff "has made it clear" that the meeting will not be held in Washington.

"We thought it was an opportunity not only to have the president and the governors come to Louisiana for two days, which is good economically, but it was an opportunity, should they come, to show the progress that Louisiana has made toward education reform, a chance to show the rest of the country the good things that are going on down here," he said.

Although New Orleans, the site of the 1988 Republican National Convention, might be considered the most logical Louisiana site, the state could provide numerous rural retreat areas should Bush decide to hold the meeting "farther out in the countryside," Cochran said.

"I think the experience of the Republican Party in New Orleans, the fact that we are a state with major comprehensive education reform ongoing and the fact that we have taken some unique steps, such as the Taylor plan, we think those are factors that ought to weigh positively," Cochran said.

The Taylor plan, approved by the Legislature this year, is designed to provide free college tuition for qualified high school graduates. The plan is named after Pat Taylor, the New Orleans oilman who first presented the idea.

Cochran said a decision on the site was expected over the next week.

"In terms of whether there is a short list or a long list, they didn't say and we didn't ask," he said.