Proposed New Complex
Will Seat 26,000

(Special to The Times-Picayune)

LAFAYETTE, La. — Groundbreaking ceremonies for the University of Southwestern Louisiana's new 26,000-seat stadium were held Friday morning on the stadium site at Bertrand rd. and W. Congress st.

A large crowd of citizens from Lafayette and area towns was on hand to see the first spade of dirt turned with a gold shovel by Dr. Clyde L. Rougeou, USL president.

A 100 per cent representation of members of the stadium committee and the stadium planning, development and construction committee was on hand. These included Herbert Heymann, chairman; William T. Bass, J. Rayburn Bertrand, Richard D'Aquin; Dudley Lastrapes, Foy McMahan, R. L. Moore, W. A. Patton, A. G. Urban and D. S. Young on the stadium committee and Dr. Ray Authement, academic vice president, Bass, Vernon F. “Dixie” Bell, Heymann, Dr. E. K. James, USL professor, Young and coach Whitey Urban, on the stadium planning, development and construction committee.

OTHERS PRESENT

Also present were members of the Lafayette legislative delegation including Senator Edgar G. Mouton Jr. and Representatives Luke LeBlanc and O. C. “Dan” Guilliot. Representative Fredric Hayes was out of town.

The contractor on the stadium is Horace Rickey Inc. of Lafayette, who submitted a low base bid of $2,846,000 with 540 calendar days' completion.

Four alternates, under 90-day completion contract, were also submitted by Rickey for the scoreboard, pressbox, east side upper deck and meet rooms and elevator.

If the alternates are included, completion would require 630 days. Rickey hopes to have the stadium completed by early 1970.

Following opening of the bids and a study of the bids submitted, USL officials made a recommendation to the state board that a contract be issued on the low base bid by Rickey as contract number one and that a second contract be issued on bid alternates one, two, three and four with this contract contingent upon funds being made available by the Legislature.

Approval by the state board on the day following the bid openings and a speed-up of legal work made possible an early start on the stadium.

Heavy excavating equipment was moved onto the site Wednesday and by Thursday work was under way on turning ground. Contractors for the excavation work are Rimmer and Garrett of Rayne.

The stadium will be of reinforced concrete with the playing field sunk 24 feet below the surface of the ground.

At the press conference the day following bid openings, Dr. Rougeou thanked all of the members of the legislative delegation, members of the stadium committees, news media and USL's many friends and supporters, adding, “The continued support of all concerned will be required to complete the construction of the entire stadium complex.”