Nobody is going to be able to control the 1973 Louisiana Constitutional Convention, its chairman, House Speaker E. L. ‘Bubba’ Henry, predicted Monday in an address at the Press Club of New Orleans’ Newsmaker luncheon at the Monteleone Hotel.

“I think that some people might think I am trying to control the Constitutional Convention,” Henry said.

“I don’t think that anyone can control that convention.”

The chairman said that “on the big issues” which the convention will attempt to resolve “I stand right in the middle” and that as presiding officer he will be concerned with providing “an atmosphere for calm deliberation.”

“I am extremely impressed with the caliber of the delegates,” he continued. “I compliment the news media on the excellent job you have done in covering the convention.”

However, Henry cautioned that if the public is to be fully informed regarding the actions of the convention and the proposed new state Constitution which is to be in its ultimate product, the state’s news media must continue their coverage and not relax their interest.

The rather narrow margin by which a proposed new Maryland Constitution was rejected by the voters of that state may have been attributable to the fact that the second largest paper in the state at some point prior to the conclusion of the state convention’s work withdrew its staff reporters from the convention and depended entirely on news wire service coverage, he said.

“We are going to have to have your help all the way,” he said of the news media.

The work of the convention will continue to be conducted in public sessions and the only time that a closed meeting was held was when the executive committee held one in order to discuss the qualifications of staff personnel to be employed.

The $350,000 appropriated by the Legislature to finance the Convention will be inadequate because “the research staff is going to cost over $400,000,” he said.

“We need a reasonable amount of money,” he said. “You get what you pay for.”