International Tourists To Meet In Lafayette

Louisiana's campaign to lure international tourists will receive a major boost in April when prominent visitors from around the world assemble in Lafayette for a unique Hemisphere meeting, James Domengeaux, chairman, Council for the Development of French in Louisiana, predicted earlier this week.

The "Congress International des Ameriques Francophones" (International Congress of French-speaking Americans) will be held April 3, 4 and 5 at Angelle Hall on the U.S.L. campus and at the Lafayette Municipal Auditorium. The event is being publicized in 136 countries.

CODOFIL is sponsoring the Congress in cooperation with all Louisiana colleges and universities, as well as top state officials, congressional leaders, leading clergymen and members of the diplomatic corps. While emphasis will be placed on bilingualism in North America in general and Louisiana in particular, the Congress will be oriented to the worldwide cultural and economic value of the French language.

Domengeaux noted that the state legislature in establishing CODOFIL in 1968 emphasized "tourist benefit" as well as cultural and economic value. "Since that time there has been a steady flow of government officials, administrators, technicians, journalists, teachers, students and businessmen from the French-speaking world to Louisiana," Domengeaux noted. "They have come to witness the Louisiana experience firsthand or to lend direct assistance to the French renaissance movement or to report its progress. They are tourists all and have already brought tens of thousands of new dollars into the Louisiana economy.

"CODOFIL feels that the international French congress will be the greatest foreign tourist boost of all and from it will come a spectacular increase in international tourism in the years ahead," Domengeaux said.

A panorama on "CODOFIL and the French Renaissance in Louisiana" will be held April 3. The first day's program will also feature a panel discussion by representatives from Louisiana colleges and universities on the "French Language and Culture in Louisiana."

Participants from Africa, France, Canada, Belgium, the French Antilles, Guiana, Haiti and Louisiana will join in a roundtable discussion April 4. Jean Louis Cagnon of Ottawa, Canada, general manager of Information Canada and former chairman of the Federal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, will speak on North America's bilingualism. Yves Berger of Paris, member of the High Committee for the Defense and Expansion of the French language; Yves Michaud of Quebec, commissioner general for Cooperation with the Exterior and Adelard Savoie, president of the University of Moncton in Moncton, New Brunswick, will be among featured foreign speakers.