Joyful noise points way to Acadian reunion in 1999

By Bill Decker
Staff Writer

Tintamarre means "uproar," "din" or "roar" — and on Tuesday, it meant "Acadian."
The tintamarre at Acadian Village made a noisy start for the National Day of the Acadians festivities.

"It's a show of pride," said organizer Brian Comeaux. "It's a political statement that the Acadian people still exist, with their music and language and culture."

One more reason: "We thought it would be a good way to get people excited about the Congres Mondial Acadien-Louisianais."
The next World Acadian Congress will be in South Louisiana in 1999.

Also Tuesday, the memory of Revon John Reed was honored for his contributions to the preservation of Acadian culture in Louisiana.

Many South Louisiana people were introduced or re-introduced to the tintamarre, which began in New Brunswick in the 1950s, at the Acadian Congress in Canada last year.

This year's National Day of the Acadians observance is the 13th since the event began. Then as now, the observance coincides with the Roman Catholic Feast of the Lady of the Assumption.

The Lady, traditionally associated with the sea, is the patron saint of the Acadians, historically a maritime people.

Reed's French music program was broadcast for years by KEUN in Eunice. Originally broadcast from Reed's home in Mamou, the program helped turn Fred's Lounge into a French music shrine.

In 1964, Reed and Mamou attorney Paul C. Tate Jr. made it possible for local musicians to appear at the popular Newport Folk Festival.

Reed's devotion to Acadian culture went beyond music to the written and spoken word. He wrote Lache pas la patate, a book written entirely in Cajun French, in 1976, and he recorded Cajun humor.

Among the other accomplishments of Reed and Tate was the revival of the Courir de Mardi Gras.

Reed was a Roman Catholic brother who left his order to enlist in the Navy during World War II. Reed was also a teacher at Mamou High School for 30 years.

Fiddle-player Hadley Castille was the featured performer for the National Day of the Acadians. A French mass, a waltz contest and a tall tales contest were also part of the celebration at Acadian Village.