Billboards like this are being erected by the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana to promote the French language.

Louisiana French Are Regaining Pride
In Heritage With Help of Agency

BY PAUL FORTEY JR.
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LAFAYETTE — “Vive la différence! Louisiana is different. Ici on parle français.”

This quote, appearing on billboards throughout Louisiana as part of a campaign to encourage pride in the state’s French heritage, is being echoed in the classrooms of the state-supported agency CODOFIL. For three years, CODOFIL has been advocating a lifetime of effort on the part of one man, James Domengeaux of Lafayette.

Like most of the French-speaking people of south Louisiana, Domengeaux can neither read nor write the language. His generation is a casualty of the melting-pot philosophy that engulfed the United States after the Civil War. The teaching of French in the schools of South Louisiana, except for trade marts in Lafayette, has been gobbled up by the American melting pot. The state legislature has reversed this erosion of the French heritage.

For years, CODOFIL has been investigating the investment opportunities in the Southwest. Now it is trying to attract tourists and students in its drive to increase the tourist traffic in “Acadiana.”

Scholarships for student from Canada and the French West Indies have been obtained from both government and private funds. CODOFIL hopes to make the area the center of Latin-American trade with the United States as well as with the French-speaking world. The establishment of the French-Spanish trade mart in Lafayette is a step in that direction.

Domengeaux also pushes the value of bilingualism in a shrinking world. He believes that the United States can become a greater force for peace by developing the ethnic backgrounds and heritage of the diverse elements in its population.

French Heritage
Leader to Address Kiwanians Here

James Domengeaux of Lafayette, chairman of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana, will address the Irish Village Kiwanis Club at a noon meeting in the Hub Diner Thursday.

Domengeaux will discuss the council’s work to preserve the French heritage in southwest Louisiana. The public, especially residents of French descent, is invited, according to Lyman Brewer, Kiwanis spokesman.