By JOHN SEMIEN
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NEW ORLEANS — Louisiana was chosen as the site of the 1983 NAACP national convention in part to bolster the state organization, national director Benjamin Hooks said Sunday.

"Louisiana is a good state but not one of our great states," Hooks said after a press conference at the Fairmont Hotel. "That's one of the reasons we came here, to make it a better state."

"You look at North and South Carolina, they're the best organized, they have the largest memberships," he said.

"We hope all the hoopla will generate excitement. Then we're going to send somebody here to organize," he said.

"We've been trying to get a state field director for this state. We just hired a director for New Orleans two months ago."

Hooks said Louisiana was one of the more successful states in the past.

"Louisiana needs it because it was one of our best states," he said. "Emphasis on civil rights shifts from state to state and from region to region. Something happens in a given state, and interest goes up. Things get pretty (See HOOKS, Page 4A)

State NAACP president Rupert Richardson agreed that the strength of the Louisiana organization has declined in recent years.

"It's undeniably true, the association in Louisiana is not as viable as it was a decade ago. That corresponds to the picture of the association nationally," she said. "The state conference was a whole lot stronger then."

"The fight has shifted, and the kind of things we do are not as visible as before," she said.

Ms. Richardson said she welcomes plans to send a state coordinator to Louisiana.

"That's what we need, is a staff person. We want to enter into a contract with the national organization to hire such a person, but that's a little long-range for us."

Ms. Richardson said the state organization would have to come up with half of the funding for a full-time staff coordinator.

"We're looking at a fund-raiser in August," she said.

"Early this year we expressed to the committee on branches our intent to raise our share for a staff person," she said.

Hooks criticized Louisiana's new justifiable homicide law, saying it could lead to undue public fear.

"I think the whole concept of punishment... shoot to kill, that is involved is a throwback to primitive days," he said. "There's no place in our modern American society. It represents some kind of passion for revenge."

He said the NAACP will study the new law and that some action probably will be taken on the measure at this convention.