Rotarians share their views of Indian, Acadian cultures

By DONNA FONTENOT
Staff Writer

A local businessman joked Wednesday that anyone wanting to go from Lafayette to India need only drive to the interstate, take a left or a right and go halfway around world.

But he and a few hundred others here aren't having to leave town for New Delhi this week.

They're getting a glimpse of the culture and people through the eyes of six visitors, who in turn, are learning firsthand of Lafayette.

They're five women and a man brought from India through Rotary International and the organization's Group Study Exchange.

A lawyer, a doctor, a senior account executive and a public relation's director make up the first-ever, all-women Rotary team. An Indian Rotarian and his wife accompany them.

They marked the mid-point of their week-long Lafayette stay with visits to various businesses and club gatherings Wednesday, and continue time to talk with area attorneys and judges, as she did with 15th Judicial District Judge Ronnie Cox Wednesday morning.

The two compared notes on judicial systems, while Singh broke from her interests as account executive with an ad firm to visit a business not found in India—a funeral home.

Virmani made the rounds of Lafayette's hospitals, meeting with fellow pediatricians, meanwhile.

Infant mortality is still quite high in India, despite efforts to curb it, she noted.

The group, in return, entertained Rotarians with the singing of their national anthem, explanations of India's British-based government and telling of other tidbits about the country with 800 million people in 22 states.

Machanda's wife, Shubh, also brought a message about Rotary clubs.

They ought to let women into the fraternity, as India does, she said. The issue was recently contested in a California court and is now on appeal in the U.S. Supreme Court.