TREEN, LOCAL OFFICIALS COOPERATE

State Projects In Lafayette Attract Interest

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Lafayette fared well in 1981 state projects, as Gov. Dave Treen sees it, because “it’s one of the blooming flowers in the state.” “It’s not just a local community anymore,” Treen said in a recent interview at the Governor’s Mansion. “It’s become a hub for interstate, national and international activities.”

The biggest and most recent indication of that, according to the governor, is the recent dedication of state funds for a new Civic Center.

Lafayette made notable strides in getting the state to help bear additional costs when the lowest bid for the center came in at $44 million. Just last month, Gov. Treen announced that the city could rely on the state to help pull out of the crunch.

That was one project.

The Hub City drew more state attention during the year over the still unopened University Medical Center and the seemingly far-off construction of a new parish jail.

“I’m proud to say we came in as needed on that Civic Center and we’re doing what we can on the Medical Center,” Treen told The Advertiser.

“Of course, the Medical Center problems ante-dated this administration. But I think we’re on our way to resolving those problems. It looks like we’ll have that facility opened by this summer.”

As for new jail construction, the outlook’s good too.

Treen says, “Assuming Lafayette’s been frugal about its jail plans and designs and the costs are unavoidable — like on the Civic Center — I would think the state would be willing to throw its share.”

He adds, “We’re not going to take on the whole thing, naturally; but we’d be likely to give the usual 30 percent cut.”

Other projects, which more indirectly affect Lafayette, stand out in Treen’s mind as “state milestones.” “I’d like for us to diversify our economy,” he says quickly. “Take reapportionment,” he says. “We did the job in a lot shorter time than most people thought. I feel confident all bills — legislative and Congressional — will survive the Justice Department.”

“If they don’t,” he added, “then we’ll have a problem.”

The governor considers the settlement of the Justice Department’s suit against the universities over desegregation to be 1981’s biggest step, along with state efforts on the Atchafalaya Basin.

A “compromise plan” on transfer of parish jail inmates to state prisons was a major accomplishment, he feels, as was the state’s Occupational License Tax and passage of the state’s $1.2 billion Capital Outlay Bill.

“I think Capital Outlay focused on high priority needs in 1981,” Treen says. “We were successful in getting many local matches.”

And 1982 goals?

“Not much different,” he says. “I’m optimistic.”

He says, “I want us to work on fiscal management, in light of federal budget cuts, as regards care for the handicapped and disabled and in light of a possible slowdown in the economy.”

“I hope my new Cost Control Commission will lead to more efficiency in state government. We don’t want to increase the number of state employees, except maybe in the law enforcement and environmental control areas.

“I’d like for us to diversify our economy and I foresee many more bills introduced on crime control. Also, a continuation of funding for jail modernization programs to relieve overcrowding.”

The governor says he also hopes to respond to “a growing public demand for more management of all sorts of environmental wastes” and to acquire more parks and recreation.

Educationally, he wants to “lower the pupil-teacher ratio in public schools, emphasize special education and get the best people possible in the very expensive system of vo-tech schools.”

And politically?

“I’m not embarking on a campaign for re-election, although I think incumbents, by being in office, campaign in a sense by what good they do.”

Treen says his political party is “doing well, what with a Republican governor, Republicans in the Legislature and a Republican mayor in Lafayette.”

But he adds, “It’s not a primary target of mine to build the party.”

Gov. Dave Treen