Top concerts too costly for Cajundome

Big-money guarantees prevent Lafayette from landing big-time acts

Claire Taylor
Writer

**LAFAYETTE —** The Cajundome, the site where big-name performers Garth Brooks, Elton John and Whitney Houston have played, has plans to bring any top acts to Cajundome in the near future.

Cajundome residents, who at times have waited in line overnight for concert tickets, will have to drive to New Orleans, Houston and Gulfport, Miss., if they want to see their favorite stars in concert.

Acadiana officials say guarantee requirements and high ticket prices are keeping big names off the arena's sign and off its stage. Cajundome officials say guarantee requirements and high ticket prices are keeping big names off the arena's sign and off its stage.

**Page 8A:** A look at some big-name acts that have played in the Cajundome:

- 1985: Kenny Rogers and The Oak Ridge Boys; Foreigner; Kiss; Willie Nelson
- 1986: Rush; Aerosmith; Luther Vandross; Stevie Wonder; Van Halen; Chicago
- 1987: Billy Joel; Kenny Rogers; The Judds; Bobby Brown; Mike Trammell
- 1988: YES; Alabama; Salt-N-Pepa; George Strait
- 1989: Bobby Brown; Randy Travis; Rod Stewart; Alabama; Bon Jovi; Tiffany; New Kids on the Block
- 1990: Clint Black; Public Enemy; Reba; MC Hammer
- 1991: Paul Simon; Randy Travis; ZZ Top; Gato Boys; Willie Nelson
- 1992: Garth Brooks; Michael Bolton; Paula Abdul; Clint Black; Travis Tritt
- 1993: Billy Ray Cyrus; B.B. King; Conway Twitty; George Jones
- 1994: Whitney Houston; Brooks and Dunn; R. Kelly; Kenny G; Alan Jackson
- 1995: The Eagles; Boyz II Men
- 1996: REO Speedwagon; Tim McGraw; Sade; Stevie Wonder; Touring the Stones; Kiss and Styx
- 1997: Metallica; Reba; Bush; Pink; Pat Benatar; Alan Jackson
- 1998: Family Values Tour; Limp Bizkit and Korn; Shania Twain; LeAnn Rimes; Boyz II Men; Reba
- 1999: Elton John; N'Sync; Bob Dylan; Garth Brooks; Train; Creed
- 2000: Dixie Chicks; Tim McGraw and Faith Hill; Kiss; Styx
- 2001: Matchbox Twenty; Isley Brothers; Kiss
- 2002: Kid Rock; George Strait

**Source:** Cajundome staff

### Concerts

Elton John, $106; for the Eagles, $90, according to Pollstar.

The Cajundome, because it is publicly owned, cannot risk public money to bring a performer to Lafayette. Davis said he is unwilling to ask local investors to risk $750,000 of their money to guarantee a concert when the ticket prices may be too high to sell out the arena.

"We have to feel confident it's a good risk," Davis said. "If we're not confident, we're not going to take it to an investor.

Smaller concerts will continue to play at the Cajundome and Convention Center. Rapper Bow Wow will perform Aug. 25 at the Cajundome.

A major concert may occasionally play at the Cajundome, but not often, Davis said. There are no plans on the books for a major concert this year.

### Some of the big-name acts that have played the Cajundome:

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### SOURCE:

Lafayette, who saw Kid Rock in the Cajundome this year, said she'd be willing to pay more than $40 to see top acts. "But not $100. I'd rather drive to New Orleans," she said.

Aboucin of Lafayette said Alice Cooper, Kiss and Styx in the 1970s and 1980s. Even though she was a student at the time, tickets were affordable. In November 2000, Aboucin said Styx and REO Speedwagon in the Cajundome for about $35.

"Maybe we have dinner with them," Aboucin said. "Lanie Boudreaux of Lafayette, who saw Kid Rock in the Cajundome this year, said she'd be willing to pay more than $40 to see top acts. "But not $100. I'd rather drive to New Orleans," she said.

Ten years ago, the average concert ticket price was $21. In 2001, the average ticket price had more than doubled to $43, according to Pollstar, a music industry magazine.

But for some top acts, particularly classic rock groups that appeal to middle-aged audiences, the average ticket price is $100 or more, with tickets for the best seats selling for hundreds of dollars.

To see Paul McCartney's 2002 concert, a fan would pay $129 for the average ticket; for Billy Joel and Elton John, tickets are $200 or more. Other concerts, particularly rock groups that appeal to middle-aged audiences, have ticket prices in the $100 range.

"Maybe after a while, people will say no to $100," Edwards said. "We could have done better.

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