USL Stadium Story

It doesn't seem that it's been almost five years since talk began about getting a new stadium for USL, a facility worthy of the university's tremendous growth year by year. But it was in 1966 that local legislators, along with ardent business leaders who were also USL boosters, traveled to Baton Rouge to talk with the governor and see what chances were of getting the necessary money for a new stadium.

The governor was heartily in favor of the move, and encouraged his Lafayette visitors to go ahead with their plans. He would sign the bill for a stadium if the legislature passed it and see that USL got the funds.

The legislators got to work. Rep. J. Luke LeBlanc introduced the bill in the House, and soon gathered many co-sponsors. In the upper chamber, Sen. Edgar Mouton carried the ball and also won many supporters to his side.

The results of their efforts will be seen tomorrow night by the thousands who go to the USL-Santa Clara game and just to recap an interesting phase of legislative history, here is the genesis of Cajun Field as reported in the files of The Daily Advertiser:

OCT. 6, 1966

Local civic leaders accompany legislative delegation to Baton Rouge to extract commitment from governor that funds be made available to construct an athletic complex at USL.

State Bond & Building Commission on the same day approves $35,000 for preliminary studies and soil tests.

MAY 9, 1967


MAY 15, 1967

The Daily Advertiser, in a front page editorial, supports the bill and asks Gov. McKeithen to give it his full backing.

MAY 17, 1967

Legislative delegation, and USL Stadium committee, consisting of Herbert Heymann, chairman, and Richard D'Aquin, Bill Patton and D. S. "Shine" Young again meet with McKeithen. Group "pleased with the governor's attitude."

MAY 18, 1967


MAY 24, 1967

House Judiciary Committee B gives bills favorable report, despite committee chairman John Garret's statement. "I have no objection to the bills, getting out on the floor, but I'm going to vote against them. If you're going to give it to one college, you ought to give it to all of them."

MAY 30, 1967

House passes bill 92-6, meeting brief flurry of opposition. A companion bill, letting USL bond funds to build stadium also won, 88-10. In essence, first measures dedicating $200,000 annual of Evangeline Downs revenue to the State Board of Education to be used for capital outlay at USL. Second measure authorizes a $3 1/2-$4 million bond issue for the stadium, using Evangeline Downs dedicated revenue to set up a special fund to service the bonds.

JUNE 6, 1967

Gov. McKeithen signs bill, assuring USL of a brand new, 28,500 seat stadium.

Witnessing the signing were LeBlanc, Miller, Mouton, Heymann, Young, D'Aquin and Dud Lastrapes. The governor said the legislature's approval of the bill was "a tribute to area legislators." "Because of the legislators high stature among their fellow solicons and because of their popularity, the bills were a success," McKeithen said.

Mouton, who steered the bill through the Senate, cited the "cooperative action" between the legislators, local police jury, and the administration. LeBlanc, original author of the bill, noted the "splendid attitude of the House and Senate," and commented that "the signing of the bill is a great day for USL and for me."

DECEMBER, 1966

Special session of the legislature. Major bond issue passes, whereby USL through the efforts of its local delegation

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