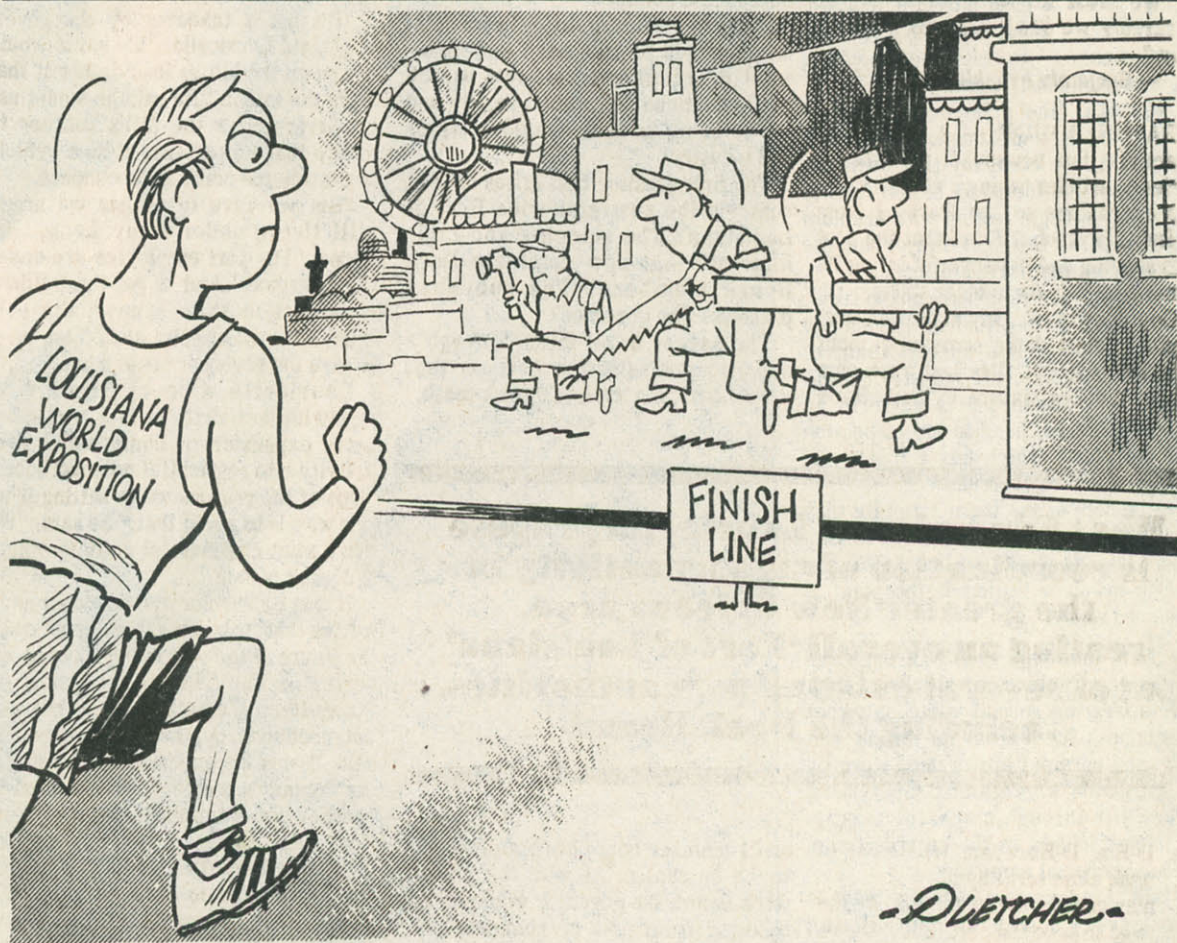


OUR OPINIONS

EDITORIALS



World's fair: Let good times roll

The New Orleans world's fair — officially, the Louisiana World Exposition — opens its gates to the world next Saturday, climaxing a frequently harrowing 11-year history. Recognizing the large stakes the state and the city have riding on it, we wish it and those responsible for it a smashing success.

The fair certainly has all the makings of a success: location on the banks of the Mississippi River in a city already renowned as a tourist mecca, spectacular exhibits including art treasures from the Vatican and exhibits from 22 other countries, "Carnival" parades, headline entertainers, the Enterprise space shuttle, an aerial gondola ride across the Mississippi and a wealth of things to see outside the fair grounds.

The fair management hopes for 12 million paid visits during the fair's six-month season, and although advance ticket sales seem to indicate a slow start, an overall success is certainly attainable.

But the larger success of the fair will be judged by its long-term effect on the city and the state — what is called, in world's fair parlance, the residuals.

The first benefit, obviously, will be the fair's mass promotion of New Orleans and Louisiana as a major tourist and convention stop. Tourism, of course, is already one of the cornerstones of the New Orleans economy, but the effect of the fair could be to enhance its status.

The chief physical residual of the fair, in fact, will be the fair's Big Hall and the post-fair New Orleans Convention and Exhibition Center, whose 350,000 square feet of exhibition space will allow us to compete for the biggest exhibitions and conventions. The exhibition hall was begun before the fair became a practical prospect, but the fair was crucial for its full financing.

Another major residual is already being realized — the rejuvenation and renovation of the old Warehouse District along the riverfront. Twenty-seven old warehouses that have been renovated by the fair will be returned to their private owners for use as office buildings, residential developments, restaurants and boutiques. Private development in the area around the fair site has accelerated, and the hope is that it will create a new multiple-use area to strengthen the downtown district. The city is negotiating with the Maryland-based Rouse Co. to turn the fair's international pavilion into a riverside shopping mall.

New Orleanians, of course, will help with the fair's success by going to it. But they also have a role as host citizens, and we urge them to extend their customary friendship and hospitality to visitors and to take in good grace any unavoidable inconveniences fair crowds may bring.