Louisiana ranked among the top states in the nation in new non-residential construction during 1982, despite the slowdowns in several areas of the state's economy, according to the Associated General Contractors of Louisiana. "Commercial-industrial construction awards to AGC of Louisiana members totaled $888.6 million through the third quarter of 1982, averaging $98.7 million per month," said Joseph T. Donnelly, president. "Based on that activity, it is almost certain that 1982 will be recorded as the year of the fifth consecutively higher level of commercial-industrial construction spending in Louisiana." The AGC predicted that the total of 1982 contracts would be more than $1 billion, when the final tabulation is made.

The Louisiana mark came during a year when construction of all kinds in the entire nation totaled $154.6 billion - a narrow gain of 1 percent over the 1981 value, according to F.W. Dodge, a recognized reporting organization in this field. Until December awards, contracting had been trailing 1981's value nationwide, Dodge said. In Louisiana, commercial-industrial contracts for 1981 totaled $526.6 million through the third quarter, or an average of $58.5 million per month. The 1982 volume was 68.7 percent ahead of 1981.

Contractor members of the AGC, which compiles the commercial-industrial (C-I) index on a quarterly basis, represent approximately 60 percent of the non-residential construction in Louisiana. The association's 130 general contractor members supply the construction data and that information is supplemented by building permit data from the U.S. Department of Commerce. The C-I index forecasts a continued strong industry through the first half of this year, even though the rate of construction activity slowed slightly during the third quarter of 1982. With some scattered exceptions, the AGC of Louisiana foresees no major construction industry layoffs through June, Donnelly said. "Overall, we expect to have a strong showing through the second quarter of this year," he said. "The slight slowing in the third quarter of 1982 is not a sign of weakness in the industry. It is a readjustment to market conditions and, in some cases, a growing inventory of underutilized space in the industrial and hotel/lodging sectors. "Both of these areas experienced weakness in the industry. It is a readjustment to market conditions and, in some cases, a growing inventory of underutilized space in the industrial and hotel/lodging sectors. "Both of these areas experienced weakness in the industry. It is a readjustment to market conditions and, in some cases, a growing inventory of underutilized space in the industrial and hotel/lodging sectors.
Building

(Continued from Page 4-E)

prolonged surges of new construction activity over the past two years. It's just natural that those areas have slowed somewhat."

August was the peak month for 1982, when the C-1 index reached 306.4 - compared to the 1978 base of 100. At the end of September, the index stood at 296.4. Overall, the index was 44.4 percent ahead of the index for the same month in 1978.

When fourth quarter statistics are complete, the index is expected to be somewhere around 370, said Ivan Miestchovich, director of the Center for Economic Development at the University of New Orleans, which prepares the index for the AGC.

"This quarter's awards for private work increased by an average of 72.9 percent, and public works contracts increased by 76 percent," Miestchovich said. While the AGC was pleased by the increase in public construction, Donnelly said, "the state is still far behind in construction of badly needed public works projects.

Louisiana's infrastructure - its public buildings, roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, sewage and drainage systems - long has been neglected. We must rebuild our infrastructure; it is the base upon which our economy stands, and it is crumbling. If the state is to attract and hold new industry and jobs, we must have the support facilities to accommodate those new industry." In the private sector, contract awards for new industrial buildings continued downward, Miestchovich said. The hotel/ lodging category was the only category in the private sector experiencing a decline in contract awards through the third quarter of 1982, he said.

Private office construction increased from a monthly average of $10.4 million in 1981 to $31.8 million in 1982. Commercial building awards were up from $9.3 million to $17.4 million, private medical and educational buildings were up in the third quarter from $2.5 million to $7.8 million and from $647,000 to more than $3 million, respectively.

The comparison of Louisiana to the nation in commercial-industrial construction activity is a new feature of AGC reports. "Louisiana, compared with national averages, has fared extremely well in nonresidential construction," Miestchovich said. "The industry has been strong in the Mississippi Valley states of Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. However, only Louisiana and Arkansas continued to add new contracts in the third quarter of 1982 at a faster rate than 1981. Louisiana, while having slowed slightly, continues its long-term rise in the rate of new commercial-industrial construction activity.

The breakdown of construction activity within the state contained no real surprises.

Lafayette, Iberia, St. Mary, Orleans, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, Rapides and East and West Baton Rouge were the parishes recording the largest construction activity gains, the report said. Construction in the Baton Rouge area continued at an overall faster pace in 1982 than in 1981, although at a slower rate of advance.

"The nine-month average of $7.6 million per month in 1982 represents a 14.3 percent increase over 1981's monthly average, but a drop from the $8.8 million average reported through the first half of 1982," said Hiram Lious Hreburt, chairman of the AGC's Baton Rouge district.

Spending in the Baton Rouge area rose from a nine-month total in 1981 of $54.8 million to a nine-month total in 1982 of $84.5 million. "East Baton Rouge Parish, which accounted for nearly one-third of the area's total contract awards in 1982, led the rate of advance in the area with a 27.8 percent increase over 1981's average for the same period," Hreburt said. "A total of $66 million was spent in East Baton Rouge through the third quarter of 1982, compared with $47 million for the same period in 1981.

Overall, the index was 44.4 percent ahead of the index for the same month in 1978.

"Adverse conditions in the petrochemical industry will be affecting the need for new construction activity within the industrial space," he noted. The comparison of Louisiana to the nation in commercial-industrial construction activity is a new feature of AGC reports. "The industry has been strong in the Mississippi Valley states of Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. However, only Louisiana and Arkansas continued to add new contracts in the third quarter of 1982 at a faster rate than 1981. Louisiana, while having slowed slightly, continues its long-term rise in the rate of new commercial-industrial construction activity.

The breakdown of construction activity within the state contained no real surprises.

Lafayette, Iberia, St. Mary, Orleans, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, Rapides and East and West Baton Rouge were the parishes recording the largest construction activity gains, the report said. Construction in the Baton Rouge area continued at an overall faster pace in 1982 than in 1981, although at a slower rate of advance.

"The nine-month average of $7.6 million per month in 1982 represents a 14.3 percent increase over 1981's monthly average, but a drop from the $8.8 million average reported through the first half of 1982," said Hiram Lious Hreburt, chairman of the AGC's Baton Rouge district.

Spending in the Baton Rouge area rose from a nine-month total in 1981 of $54.8 million to a nine-month total in 1982 of $84.5 million. "East Baton Rouge Parish, which accounted for nearly one-third of the area's total contract awards in 1982, led the rate of advance in the area with a 27.8 percent increase over 1981's average for the same period," Hreburt said. "A total of $66 million was spent in East Baton Rouge through the third quarter of 1982, compared with $47 million for the same period in 1981.

Overall, the index was 44.4 percent ahead of the index for the same month in 1978.

"Adverse conditions in the petrochemical industry will be affecting the need for new construction activity within the industrial space," he noted. The comparison of Louisiana to the nation in commercial industrial construction activity is a new feature of AGC reports. "The industry has been strong in the Mississippi Valley states of Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. However, only Louisiana and Arkansas continued to add new contracts in the third quarter of 1982 at a faster rate than 1981. Louisiana, while having slowed slightly, continues its long-term rise in the rate of new commercial-industrial construction activity.

The breakdown of construction activity within the state contained no real surprises.

Lafayette, Iberia, St. Mary, Orleans, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, Rapides and East and West Baton Rouge were the parishes recording the largest construction activity gains, the report said. Construction in the Baton Rouge area continued at an overall faster pace in 1982 than in 1981, although at a slower rate of advance.

"The nine-month average of $7.6 million per month in 1982 represents a 14.3 percent increase over 1981's monthly average, but a drop from the $8.8 million average reported through the first half of 1982," said Hiram Lious Hreburt, chairman of the AGC's Baton Rouge district.

Spending in the Baton Rouge area rose from a nine-month total in 1981 of $54.8 million to a nine-month total in 1982 of $84.5 million. "East Baton Rouge Parish, which accounted for nearly one-third of the area's total contract awards in 1982, led the rate of advance in the area with a 27.8 percent increase over 1981's average for the same period," Hreburt said. "A total of $66 million was spent in East Baton Rouge through the third quarter of 1982, compared with $47 million for the same period in 1981.

Overall, the index was 44.4 percent ahead of the index for the same month in 1978.