Lake Charles, Lafayette show growth, Bayou parishes decline

Non-residential construction activity in Lafayette and Lake Charles posted gains in the first half of 1981 over first-half 1980 figures, but the Bayou Parishes area of the state showed declines. These are among findings contained in the Commercial-Industrial (C-I) Construction Index of the Associated General Contractors of Louisiana. The index is designed to chart and forecast non-residential construction in the state by general contractors.

Contract awards in the Lake Charles area for the first half of this year were up 105.3 percent over last year's first half pace, from $4.94 million per month in 1980 to $10.14 million per month in 1981. "The figures illustrate the strong rate of commercial-industrial construction that has been under way in the area for the past two years," says Carl Ivey, chairman of AGC's Lake Charles District.

Lafayette area construction averaged $3.5 million per month through the first half of the year, up 19.8 percent from a figure of $2.9 million in the same period of 1980. "Energy-related construction is our mainstay," says Frank Etier, AGC Acadian District chairman, and it likely will remain so for the near future. In the Bayou Parish area, consisting of Iberia, Lafourche, St. Mary and Terrebonne, however, non-residential construction was off. Contract awards for those parishes averaged $354,000 a month, or 80.8 percent less than the 1980 second-quarter monthly average of $1.85 million.

Building permits, as reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce and also contained in the AGC La. report, were off as well, down 58.5 percent, from $9.54 million to $3.96 million.

Both contract awards and permits, however, showed increases over last year's first half for non-residential construction in Iberia and St. Mary parishes.