

# I-40 Project Nears Start

From The Commercial Appeal  
Nashville Bureau

NASHVILLE, Nov. 5. — Barring some unforeseen legal snag, work should begin in about two weeks on Interstate Highway 40-through Memphis' Overton Park.

State Highway Engineer H. D. Long said Thursday the Memphis project had been awarded to Michael Construction Co. of Chattanooga with a low bid of \$5,399,350.

"Generally we issue a work order about two weeks after the award," Long said. "They (the Michael firm) are ready to go."

The award was made despite the fact the park route has long been in various stages of dispute and litigation and still is covered by at least a thin legal cloud.

Conservationists seeking to block the park route lost their case in federal district court and that decision has been upheld by the Sixth United States Circuit Court of Appeals. They could appeal to the United States Supreme Court.

Long said the Michael firm also was awarded the contract on a job to tie in the approach spans of the new Mississippi River bridge with Third Street in Memphis. The Michael bid on that job was \$5,298,990.

Another contract awarded Thursday was one to construct the approach spans to the bridge, which is now under construction. The work will cost \$7,923,212, on a successful bid by Bethlehem Steel Corp., the main span contractor.

Long said those two jobs also are expected to get underway in about two weeks.

Attorney Charles F. Newman, representing plaintiffs in the long court fight to bar the expressway from the park, said a decision has not been made whether to appeal the Sixth Circuit Court's ruling.

However, he said, the decision will probably be made within two weeks.

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