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Brock Expects A Decision On I-40 By End Of The Year

By LYNN NORMENT

Sen. Bill Brock (R-Tenn.) yesterday said if there is one more delay in the Overton Park expressway decision, "I'll get out there myself with a pick and shovel."

In response to a question at the Henry Loeb dutchtreat luncheon, Brock, who is campaigning for re-election Nov. 2, said he has had "more promises and less performance" with the expressway issue than "anything I've ever dealt with."

However, he said he feels sure the U.S. Department of Transportation will make a final decision "before the year is over" on where and how to complete the 3.7-mile gap in Interstate 40.

Brock praised Transportation Secretary William Coleman for his efforts to get the matter resolved. "Bill Coleman is an honest, straightforward man. When he says something, he never fails to do it."

"We have finally gotten the proposal (environmental impact statement from the Tennessee Department of Transportation). We will have the hearings and make a decision before the year is over. I wish I could promise to get it done before election, but I can't make that commitment."

State officials have scheduled the public hearings for Aug. 18 and 19, beginning at 9 a.m. each day in the City Council chambers. The hearings are the final input into the debate before it is turned over to Coleman for a decision.

The state favors the "plaza design" in which a \$30-million roadway through the park would be depressed and covered at intervals by greenery and plazas.

When asked what he thought about GOP presidential hopeful Ronald Reagan's choice of Sen. Richard Schweiker for his running mate, the 45-year-old Brock said, "Not much."

Brock said that although Reagan's chances of winning the Republican party's nomination for president have been hurt by Schweiker, the race between him and President Gerald Ford "is too close to call.

"But if Reagan should win, some of us will help him, advise him, in finding someone else to run with."

During the 45-minute speech and question-answer session, Brock, who will face Democrat Jim Sasser in the Nov. 2 election, discussed numerous national and local issues.