

— Press Photo by Albert M. Herrmann Jr.

Expressway, looking south, dead-ends in woods in Harrison Twp. where final link must be built.

Allegheny Expressway Snagged

By JOE GRATA

Because state lawmakers are still wrestling with the proposed 1973-74 capital budget, construction has been delayed on a key link in the Allegheny Valley Expressway.

The 1.5-mile stretch is needed to complete the expressway from Harwick to Creighton where an intersection will be built.

In the interim, three completed miles of the modern, four-lane road north of Harwick will remain closed to traffic until at least mid-1976.

Contract Ready

Department of Transportation (PennDot) communicate shows the estimated \$11.4 million contract on the expressway portion to Creighton was ready to let in May.

Allowing the planned 2½ years for construction, the project should have been completed in December 1975.

A PennDot spokesman said, however, the department cannot proceed without the spending authorization of the capital.

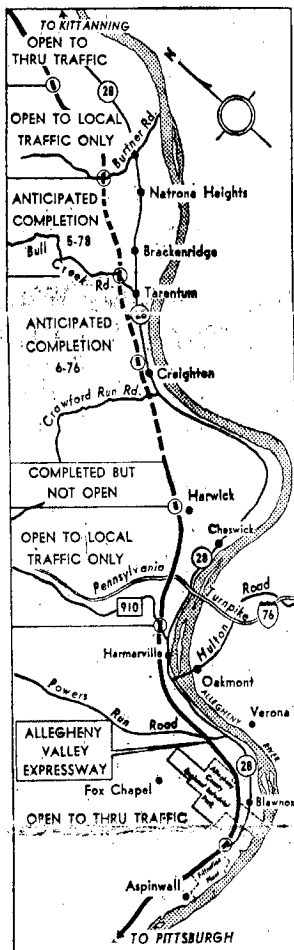
The state's 1973-74 fiscal year began July 1.

2nd Pact Jeopardized

The lack of budget action also jeopardizes a second contract to be let next spring.

This estimated \$6 million pact would relocate part of Bull Creek, construct a service road and build bridge arches in advance of the "main contract," scheduled for letting early in 1975, to speed up the overall completion of the expressway.

The main contract, estimat-



STATUS REPORT — Map shows status of the 16-mile Allegheny Valley Expressway. Solid line indicates completed portions, two of which are officially open to "local traffic only."

ed at \$17.5 million for 2.9 miles in East Deer and Harrison townships and Tarentum Borough, is the third and final one covering the 16-mile, \$80 million expressway within Allegheny County.

The road now dead-ends in the woods at both ends of the missing link.

Designed to alleviate traffic on Route 28 through communities on the northern bank of the Allegheny River, the expressway should be finished in the county by May, 1978.

According to PennDot, Dis-

trict 11 Engineer Anthony J. Gaeta, dividing up the missing link into three contracts at the direction of state Transportation Secretary Jacob G. Kasab will speed the project by about one year.

"But various things could upset our timetable," Gaeta said, pointing to possible shortages of cement, steel and fuel plus possible difficulties with labor contracts.

Last year PennDot opened the expressway north to Route 910 so motorists could bypass Blawnox to the Turnpike and points north.

The section from Route 28 in the northeast corner of the county previously was opened in Butler and Armstrong counties to Kittanning.

Also open in Allegheny are two sections designated "for use by local traffic only."

PennDot officials have blamed the delay in building the missing link on past community opposition.

Several years ago, residents of Creighton, Tarentum and neighboring areas protested preliminary designs, forcing state engineers and planners back to their drawing boards

to come up with another highway corridor location.