

# Four Hours Driving Time Being Eliminated from Coast Highway

Following World War II, a journey from Astoria to the California state line over highway 101 took at least 11 hours driving time.

Today, the previous 389 miles of 1945's Oregon Coast highway have been trimmed to 364, with construction under way or contracts being let this season to chop another 18 miles and nearly an hour's driving time.

More than 165 miles, nearly half the distance from border to border—will have been rebuilt to modern standards by next year, and the average motorist will take just seven hours to drive the length of the highway.

First contract to be let on the coast route by the state highway commission was a 1917 project for five miles of grading and paving south of Tillamook. Early progress was slow on building other portions, though, as the pick, shovel, and horse-drawn fresco construction methods were no match for jumbled mountains that reach to the water's edge along much of the coast.

### Boom in Building

With the depression came a boom in coastwise highway building, however, and the entire route was completed with an oiled surface, or better, by 1934. Most of the last gaps were filled with the opening in 1935 and 1937 of five bridges across the large water barriers at Newport, Waldport, Florence, Reeds-

port, and Coos Bay.

Following World War II when attention could once more be shifted from military matters to domestic affairs, it became apparent that Oregon's ever-increasing number of automobiles and trucks coupled with mechanical advances in these machines had caused highways considered adequate for pre-war conditions to become outdated. In bringing these roads up to modern standards some have been rebuilt by improving the older roadbed and many have been entirely relocated along a new alignment.

The Gold Beach-Brookings portion of Highway 101 in southern Curry county is an instance where the entire highway between the two towns is being replaced by 27.7 miles of new highway, much of it along a new alignment, at a cost of approximately \$18,391,000. The new route will reduce the distance between the towns 8.5 miles and will save 25 minutes time.

### Spectacular Construction

Most spectacular of the Curry county projects currently under construction is the 15-mile Brookings-Burnt Hill section. Being in the worst part of the rugged country between Brookings and Gold Beach, this is, mile for mile, some of the most difficult two-lane construction undertaken in the United States.

Cutting through a wild land of high, steep bluffs and deep canyons, the new route will

take motorists past bays and beaches formerly visited only by a rare and hardy few who hiked in on foot from the present highway farther inland.

In a series of mountain-moving excavations, contractors Peter Kiewit and Sons, Dardenwald-Harms company and Morrison-Knudson company are turning the sawtooth landscape into a leveled roadbed by means of tremendous cuts and fills.

Too big to fill, though, is the gaping Thomas creek canyon near the middle of the present construction project. More than 900 feet in length, the steel and concrete Thomas creek bridge under construction there now will be the state's highest bridge when completed, measuring 345 feet from the deck to the streambed below. Total cost of this section, with bridge, will be \$10,817,000, not including right of way.

### Same General Project

A few miles to the north in the Buena Vista-Myers creek section is another 6.4-mile portion of the same general project.

In Coos county, the Bandon-Davis slough cutoff was opened to traffic this winter, cutting driving time between Bandon and Coos Bay by some 25 minutes. The U. S. bureau of public roads plans to open in 1962 the 7.5-mile Otis Junction-Neskowin section now under construction as a federally-financed forest highway project.

On the Garibaldi-Bay City project north of Tillamook, a contract of approximately \$1,000,000 will be let this spring for grading along a new 2.5 mile section from Bay City to Hobsonville. Biggest news on the northern coast is the new Astoria-Camp Rilea project, let to Umpqua River Navigation company, Reedsport, for a bid of \$980,000. Work will begin this season on the grading portion of a 3.4-mile section.

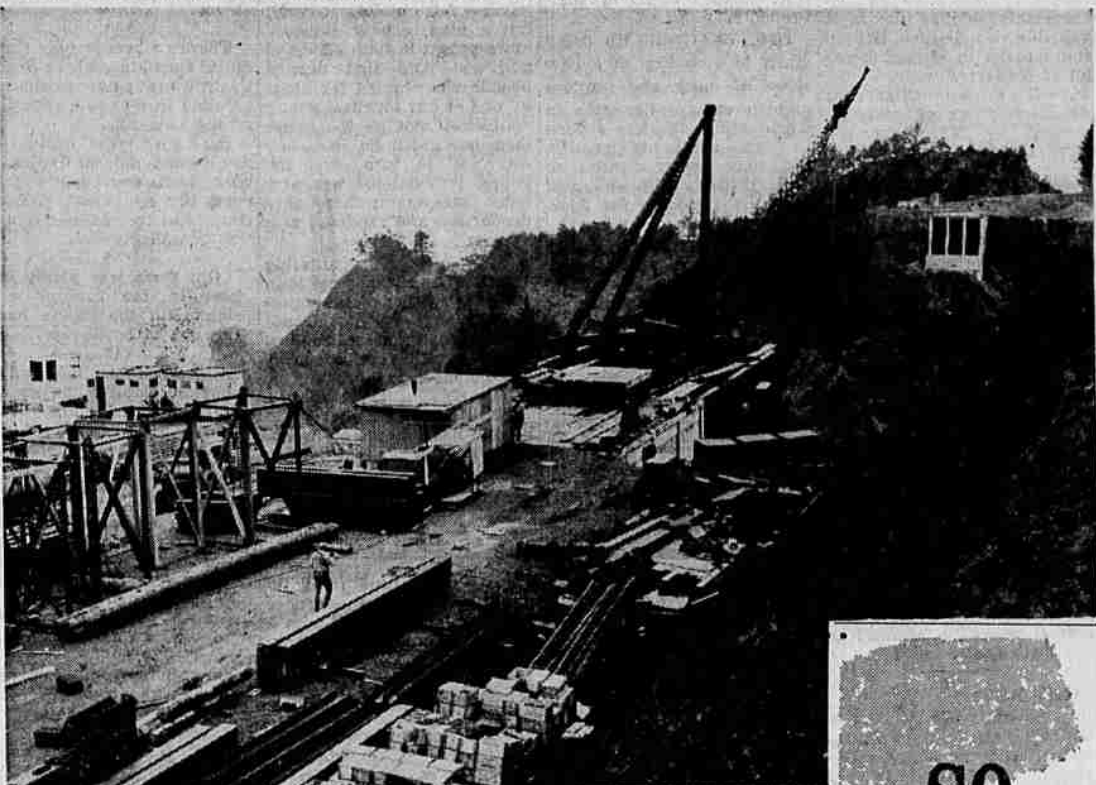
As these last portions of the Oregon Coast highway move toward completion, the era of the coastline corkscrew and cliffhangers is seeing its final chapter. With the advances in construction skills and engineering techniques has come the highway that proves a scenic highway need not be slow or winding.

### Lumber Market Leveling Indicated

Portland—APR—Crow's Lumber Market News Service said today there are indications of a leveling off on the market for West Coast lumber and plywood.

Green Douglas fir studs, along with random length division, have lost a dollar or two from last week's high.

Markets for western pine species continued to climb gradually, with shortages of inventory at the mill level continuing.



**WORK CONTINUES**—Work on the high steel of Thomas creek bridge south of Gold Beach in Curry county continued throughout the winter despite 80-mile per hour winds and ocean-born storms. Construction workers prefabricate sections of the span

on the south approach, foreground, then swing the parts into place by means of the boom hanging precariously over the 350-foot chasm. This connecting link of relocated Highway 101 will be the state's highest bridge when completed.

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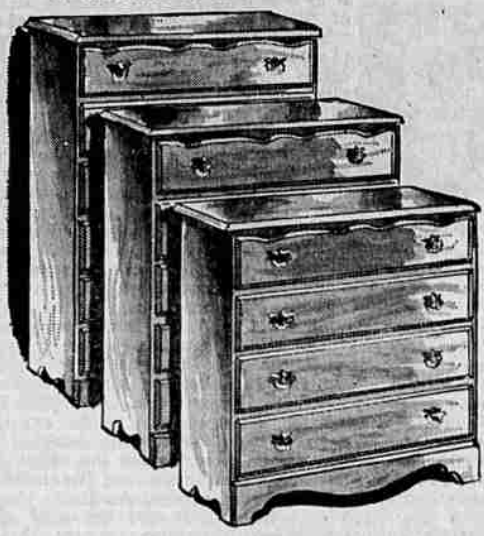
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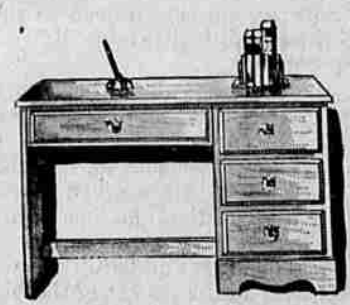


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