

## **Maine's new "Adopt A Highway" Program**

New program will be administered by municipalities who choose to create a program

In 1997, the Legislature passed a bill which created this program for Maine. In fact, Maine is the 49th state to establish such a Program (Vermont is the last). The law (23MRS §1117) states that the Commissioner of the DOT adopt some "rules" for establishing this program for litter control and beautification activities on all public highways. The Program permits business organizations and nonprofit community organizations to participate in these activities AND receive some recognition along Maine highways in the form of certain signs.

It wasn't until February, 1999 that the DOT adopted the formal "rules" for this Program. Here are some of the highlights of the Adopt A Highway Program Rule as specified under MDOT Chapter 17-229-207: (full copy available by calling)

- the primary purpose is to allow individuals, businesses, and nonprofit organizations to participate in litter control and beautification activities along Maine's public highways
- all public highways, both State and local, are eligible for participation
- any interested municipality or county may adopt its own program for these activities
- MDOT will have limited involvement
- any sign erected to recognize participating organizations must have a permit from the MDOT
- each sign shall not exceed 4 square feet in area, and the cumulative total for each full sign assembly may not exceed 50 square feet.
- each municipality can erect up to four full sign assemblies within its boundaries to announce the existence of this Program in the Town.
- each sign assembly will be installed and maintained by the town.
- MDOT will have final responsibility and authority to determine the specific size and location of any sign assembly.
- this Program does NOT apply to the Interstate or a fully-controlled access highway
- MDOT's Community Services Division has a full packet of information for municipalities to start a Program (safety tips, application forms, etc)

- Here is the basic process which any interested town will have to follow:
- call DOT's Community Services Division for the info packet on this Program (or check out our website)
- decide to establish a Program and set up your local rules, preferably in ordinance form
- provide those rules to the Boy Scouts, or the Kiwanis Club, or any interested group who wants to "adopt" a highway in town
- submit application from the Town to the MDOT for permission to erect these signs (even on local roads)
- design, purchase, install, and maintain a sign or sign assembly (for multiple groups) anywhere in town (limit is 4 per town)
- monitor groups so that safety is number 1 while working off the road