

PENNDOT ADOPT AND BEAUTIFY PROGRAM PACKET PART 1 GENERAL INFORMATION

- **“Thank You For Your Interest” Letters**
- **Application Form**
- **Program Overview/Goals/Fact Sheet/Policy Statement**
- **Safety Requirements**
- **Safety Recommendations**
- **Definition of Terms**

Note to Coordinator: Discard this page prior to sending to potential participant. Customize the “Thank you for your interest” letter by adding your name and address.

Letter “A”

A NOTE FROM PennDOT...

Dear Potential Adopt & Beautify Participant:

Thank you for your interest in PennDOT’s Adopt & Beautify program. I am happy to send you this information and application to begin the process of “adopting” a portion of a state-maintained highway.

Under the Adopt & Beautify program, volunteer groups of individuals known as Beautification Sponsor Groups agree to become special caretakers of a portion of state highway for a two-year period. The group signs an agreement with PennDOT and promises to seed or plant and maintain wildflowers, shrubs, trees or other acceptable vegetation and pick up litter on their highway segment as needed.

In return, PennDOT posts signs along the highway acknowledging the adopting group. Groups also participate in safety training, using materials provided by PennDOT, and observe safety procedures while at work on the highways. PennDOT also provides work gloves, disposable safety vests and suitable collection bags for our volunteers to use during their beautification activities.

Volunteers must be at least 8 years old, and adults must accompany children under 18.

Please consider this commitment carefully. While we are glad to offer this program to volunteer groups and individuals, we must be careful to work with only those groups who demonstrate a serious commitment to the program.

Should you choose to return the enclosed application, I will contact you to discuss the specific beautification area you would like to adopt, and review with you the paperwork you will need to complete to become an official Adopt & Beautify participant.

Don’t hesitate to call if you have any questions. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,

Roadside Specialist name
PennDOT District ____
Roadside Specialist

Letter “B”

A NOTE FROM PENNDOT...

Dear Ms. Reiber:

Thank you for your interest in PennDOT’s Adopt & Beautify Program!

Here is a copy of the initial Application Form. Please complete it and return it to me to start the approval process.

There are a few requirements that potential groups must meet in order to be considered for participation. Please take a moment to review the following:

- Adopted areas must be on PennDOT-maintained roadways or interchange areas.
- Adopted areas must be adopted for a two-year period which is automatically renewed.
- Adopted areas must be maintained as needed by the adopting group.
- Adopting groups must review PennDOT safety materials prior to site maintenance and must obey all safety procedures while at work on the state highway.
- No one under eight years of age is permitted to participate. Volunteers under 18 years of age must complete a Parent’s/Guardian’s Consent Form.

If you need additional information, or if you have any additional questions, please contact me at (Phone Number.)

Sincerely,

Roadside Specialist’s name
PennDOT District ___
Roadside Specialist

PennDOT ADOPT & BEAUTIFY PROGRAM

PURPOSE

Throughout the Commonwealth, there are numerous small locations that need our attention to keep them beautiful and attractive... locations like a scenic overlook, a “primitive” rest area, an interchange area, a gateway into your town or city. Each of these spots just needs someone who cares enough to design and install a flowerbed, a community group that will take the responsibility to weed and fertilize when needed, a club that will plant and maintain a tree or a business that will landscape and keep it looking good.

An out-growth of the highly-successful Adopt-A-Highway Program, PennDOT’s Adopt & Beautify (A & B) Program is designed to provide a vehicle for environmentally-minded business, professional and civic-minded groups to render assistance to their community. By supplying volunteer services to maintain and upgrade certain areas adjacent to PennDOT-controlled roadways and interchanges, they help in reducing costs to the taxpayers of the Commonwealth. Each Beautification Sponsoring Group (BSG) is given public recognition through appropriate signage in the adopted area itself in exchange for the BSG’s efforts.

SCOPE OF WORK

Beautification Sponsoring Groups may provide any or all, but are not necessarily limited to, the following services:

1. *Litter control and beautification*— The Beautification Sponsoring Group will establish a schedule approved by PennDOT for routine maintenance of adopted areas. PennDOT will assist the group with safety training, will provide trash bags, work gloves and safety vests, and will arrange for trash bag removal. The BSG will be permitted to make improvements to existing areas such as rest areas and interchange areas through the introduction of flower beds, shrubs, trees and other acceptable beautification projects approved by PennDOT. Funding and materials for these projects would be the responsibility of the BSG. Use of PennDOT equipment and man-power to assist the Beautification Sponsoring Group will be at the discretion of the County Maintenance Manager, based on necessity and availability.
2. *Mowing and Trimming* – This activity may be provided after a proper schedule can be established and maintained to the satisfaction of the County Maintenance Manager or designee. Additional safety precautions must be adhered to for this type of activity.
3. *Vegetation Management* – This activity consists mainly of clearing vegetation from walks, drains and curbing, weeding flowerbeds, thinning out wooded areas and clearing safety sightlines on entry ways and exits to the adopted area. (This would typically appeal to a larger group seeking more comprehensive management of an area upon approval of the County Maintenance Manager.)
4. *Repairs/Improvements (Rest Areas Only)* – This service category would include repairing, painting, making improvements or adding to existing building, benches, picnic tables, information boards, etc. All improvements must be pre-approved.

MATERIALS

PennDOT will assist the group with safety training, will provide trash bags, work gloves and safety vests, and will arrange for trash bag removal and disposal. Materials or supplies for repairs, beautification and new construction will be the responsibility of the BSG. The County Maintenance Manager may furnish certain materials at his/her discretion pending availability of such materials.

SAFETY TRAINING

BGSs will be given safety training via the *Beautify PA Safely* compact disk before being allowed to participate in the Program. A list of safety requirements and a list of safety recommendations will be distributed to each BSG.

SIGNS AND RECOGNITION

Each participating BSG will be given recognition in the form of a sign erected within the adopted location by PennDOT.

ADOPT AND BEAUTIFY PROGRAM

APPLICATION FORM / PRELIMINARY APPROVAL

Date: _____

Please Print:

Beautification Sponsor Group/Individual: _____

Address: _____

Contact Person: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Type of Beautification Project: ___ Litter Pickup ___ Landscaping ___ Both
___ Other (Please describe Other Project: _____)

Requested Highway Beautification Area Description: (Route Number, Location, Specific Portion): _____

Expected Number of Participants: Adults: _____ Minors: _____

(Please Complete Attachment B For All Participants Under Age 18.)

Name As It Is To Appear on Sign: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

PennDOT District Roadside Specialist Comments:

Reviewed By: _____

Beautification Project Preliminary Approval _____ Disapproval _____

By: _____
(See Routing Sheet, Adopt & Beautify Participation Form for Designated Approvers)

Return this form to PennDOT's District Roadside Specialist through the appropriate maintenance office in the county in which you wish to participate.

ADOPT & BEAUTIFY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

WHAT IS THE ADOPT & BEAUTIFY PROGRAM?

- A community involvement program that brings citizen volunteers into a partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to enhance the beauty of the roadside environment
- An educational program that promotes roadside beauty via visibility of adoption signs
- A coordinated program that presents a better first impression of Pennsylvania to tourists and prospective business investors
- An opportunity for local citizens to take the responsibility for beautifying the highway
- A program that includes the erection of signs to give recognition to the adopting group
- A program to demonstrate citizen pride in the appearance of a community to passing motorists

PENNSYLVANIA'S CALL FOR THE PROGRAM

- The program began here as a result of numerous letters and calls from citizens requesting this type of program within the Commonwealth
- PennDOT's program was not the result of any legislative mandates

PROGRAM GOALS

- To enhance the attractiveness of Pennsylvania's roadsides and landscapes and help to increase environmental awareness
- To pick up and reduce litter while adding to and improving the appearance of Commonwealth's roadsides
- To form an environmental partnership with citizens to enhance the environment and beautify roadside landscapes
- To continue to build broad based community support for highway beautification programs
- To continue to build a positive public image and to modify the public's attitude towards roadside beautification

ADOPT & BEAUTIFY PROGRAM FACT SHEET

The Adopt & Beautify program reinforces PennDOT's roadway beautification by involving citizens across the Commonwealth in efforts along Pennsylvania's 40,000 miles of state maintained highways. The program allows groups or individuals to become special "caretakers" of certain portions of state highways not included in other PennDOT beautification programs.

- Adopting groups must sign a program participation packet with PennDOT and agree to adopt and maintain a portion of state highway. PennDOT must agree that the adopted area is suitable for beautification efforts.
- Groups must agree to site maintenance under a two-year agreement which will renew automatically unless either party chooses to terminate it.
- Safety is a top priority. Group leaders must use safety materials provided by PennDOT, and must conduct safety meetings with group members before each pick-up.
- All participants must wear orange safety vests and must post "Litter/Work Crew Ahead" signs during scheduled beautification activities. Vests and signs are provided by PennDOT.
- PennDOT will post signs naming the beautification group or individual within the adopted beautification site.
- Participants must be at least 8 years old. Adults must accompany participants under 18.
- Any civic-minded group or individual may participate, with the exception of those representing an elected official or candidate for public office. No business logo or commercial advertising is to be used or displayed by the beautification group.

PARTICIPATION IN THE ADOPT & BEAUTIFY PROGRAM (POLICY STATEMENT)

The creation and adoption of a beautification area is a privilege that may be granted by PennDOT to individuals and or groups who would assist the Adopt & Beautify Program in achieving its purpose and goals.

PennDOT may refuse to grant a request to beautify an area if, in its opinion, granting the request would jeopardize the program, be counterproductive to its purpose or create a hazard to the safety of the traveling public. Safety is a principal concern in all decisions related to the program.

Program participants agree to hold PennDOT harmless and agree not to hold PennDOT responsible for any injuries that they may suffer or damages they may cause or suffer as a result of participation in the program.

The Adopt & Beautify Program allows groups or individuals to become involved with beautifying the highway roadside in selected locations by planting trees, shrubs and ground covers that will create a more pleasant appearing and beautifying aspect to the surrounding area.

The Beautification Sponsor Groups (BSG) plant the beautification area and provide the plant care and maintenance necessary to keep the beautification area alive and growing. Their efforts can provide long-lasting enjoyment for motorists traveling along Pennsylvania highways. As plants continue to grow and mature, they physically change the appearance of an area and provide environmental and physiological benefits for years to come.

Beautification Sponsor Groups (BSG) interested in participating in the Adopt & Beautify program should contact their local PennDOT District Roadside Specialist (DRS) and request copies of Pub. 461 – Roadside Planting Guidebook and Pub. 461A, Roadside Planting Application Guidebook. These publications contain information that will help the BSG to learn about roadside planting criteria and the maintenance efforts that may be required to keep a beautification area looking attractive. The DRS will also review and recommend various plant care and maintenance work that may be necessary for the BSG to consider before entering into the Adopt & Beautify program agreement

Publication 461A contains the initial Highway Beautification Application (HBA) necessary for requesting to adopt and beautify a specific roadside location. The application will enable the sponsoring group to select their proposed beautification area and describe the desired planting project. The sponsoring group should work closely with the District Roadside Specialist to complete the application with sufficient information and preliminary planting plans that will enable PennDOT to evaluate and approve the proposed roadside beautification planting area.

Upon approval of the application, the sponsoring group will be asked to sign an Adopt & Beautify participation packet and agreement with PennDOT.

ADOPT & BEAUTIFY SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

Document Number _____ District _____ County _____

Group Name _____

Participants shall:

- Upon arriving at the work site, immediately display PennDOT's official "Litter/Work Crew Ahead" safety sign in advance of beautification site.
- Not possess or drink alcoholic beverages.
- Conduct at least one safety orientation meeting during the year.
- Provide appropriate and adequate adult supervision when youth groups are involved in beautification efforts; that is, one adult per eight participants between the ages of 8 and 17.
- Avoid peak traffic hours, holiday weekends and extreme inclement weather conditions.
- Conduct pre-planting or maintenance safety talks.
- Avoid all horseplay or demonstrations of any nature on the right-of-way.
- Wear the safety vest provided by PennDOT.
- Be aware of all known allergies of volunteers before participation (bee stings, poison ivy, poison oak).

Reviewed with BSG/Individuals on _____

(Date)

by _____
(Name and Title)

ADOPT & BEAUTIFY SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

Document Number _____ Group Name _____

Participants should:

- Know emergency procedures such as the location of the nearest emergency facility and how to quickly summon the police or an ambulance.
- Provide their own first-aid kit and include kit with other supplies during beautification work.
- Avoid overexertion and heat problems by drinking water and taking breaks.
- Carpool to the beautification site and park vehicles a safe distance from the traveled roadway.
- Wear the recommended attire: long sleeves, blue jeans or long pants, leather shoes or boots and gloves. A hat is also recommended as protection from the sun. Wear the safety vest provided by PennDOT.
- Be careful of contact with poison plants, bees, wasps, hornets, ticks, fire ants, and snakes. The recommended attire will usually prevent irritations from most poison plants.
- Be aware of visibility problems and for any unexpected behavior of motorists.
- Do not stand or jump on guide rail, drainage pipes, or on concrete walls.
- Be aware of all known allergies of volunteers before participation.
- Avoid all horseplay or demonstration of any nature on the right-of way.
- Vehicles should remain on the same side of the highway as the volunteers.
- Not possess or drink alcoholic beverages.
- Provide appropriate and adequate adult supervision when youth groups are involved; for example, one adult per eight youths.
- Avoid peak traffic hours and extreme inclement weather conditions.

Reviewed with BSG/Individuals on _____ by _____
(Date) (Initials)

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Adoption – An agreement by an individual or group to maintain, beautify and remove litter and trash from a specified section of state-maintained highway.

Adopt & Beautify Program – A public participation program of the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) designed to assist in improving the environmental health and appearance of state maintained highways.

Adopted Section – The portion of state maintained highway approved for beautification by volunteers.

Authorized Representative – In a group situation, the group member acting on behalf of the entire organization for the purpose of adopting a site to beautify.

Beautification Area/Site – A selected site within the highway right-of-way that is used to plant vegetation by recognized groups or individuals in order to beautify the highway.

Beautification Sponsor Group (DSG) - Citizen volunteers who enter into a partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to promote and provide more attractive roadsides.

Beautification Sponsor Individual - Citizen volunteers acting without a formal structure in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) to promote and provide more attractive roadsides.

District Roadside Specialist (DRS) – An individual in each PennDOT Engineering District who is responsible for roadside maintenance, planting and vegetation management functions. Serves as a liaison with sponsor groups to implement the beautification program.

Highway Beautification Manager (SHBM) – Highway beautification program coordinator located in Central Office as part of the staff of the PennDOT Bureau of Maintenance and Operations.

Program – The Adopt & Beautify Program

Program Coordinator – PennDOT's representative in the field for this beautification program, usually the District Roadside Specialist. Also referred to as the Adopt & Beautify Coordinator.

Program Directing Office – The PennDOT Bureau of Maintenance and Operations.

Program Participants – Individuals and/or groups that have adopted sections of right-of-way to beautify. Civic and non-profit organizations, as well as commercial and private enterprises may be selected as groups for the purpose of adopting and beautifying.

Program Participation Package – Packet of information given to the group to fill out. It must be signed by the appropriate District/County and Central Office personnel prior to beginning their involvement in the program.

ADOPT & BEAUTIFY PROGRAM PLANTING AND MAINTENANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Safety during the planting and maintenance of the beautification area is a top priority. Beautification Sponsor Group (BSG) Leaders must ensure that the safety materials provided by PennDOT are used and must conduct safety meetings with all participants before beginning any planting or maintenance event at the beautification area.

The group must be aware that installing plants require special efforts by the participants and requires the use of various types of equipment and material.

The use of planting equipment can be dangerous and only people experienced with the equipment should be allowed to use them. The group is required to provide their own planting equipment and materials.

Equipment that should be considered for most planting projects includes:

- Shovels
- Rakes
- Buckets
- Pickaxes
- Wheelbarrows
- Pruning shears
- Pocket knives
- Water hose
- Gloves
- Roto-tillers

Larger planting areas requiring soil movement may require the use of larger equipment such as bucket loaders, backhoes, and various sized trucks.

Material generally needed for planting work to meet PennDOT planting specifications could include:

- Topsoil / Peat Moss / Compost
- Mulch material
- Water
- Fertilizer packets or tablets
- Bracing stakes and bracing straps
- Mycorrhiza packets
- Polymer water absorbent granules

Planting maintenance operations may include the following types of work:

- Weeding
- Watering
- Mulch replacement
- Plant replacement
- Grass trimming / mowing
- Pruning / trimming
- Litter / debris removal
- Pesticide / Herbicide spraying
- Tree brace straightening and eventual removal

Program participants agree to remove all equipment, excess materials, litter and maintenance debris from the beautification area upon completion of all planting and maintenance activities.

Adopt & Beautify Program participants agree to hold PennDOT harmless and agree not to hold PennDOT responsible for any injuries that they may suffer or damages that they may cause or suffer as a result of their participation in the program.