

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM

Local communities across Cayuga County show their commitment to keep the County beautiful by adopting miles of county highway and keeping them free of litter.

On Earth Day (April 22nd) 2019, the Cayuga County Highway Division pitched in and collected more than 4,600 lbs. of litter from county roads. The trash included discarded televisions and used tires. Litter on our roads is unsightly and it is a hazard to the traveling public and wildlife. This program keeps our roads beautiful and safe. The Cayuga County Department of Public Works requested the program and County Legislature passed legislature to create the program in May 2019. The program encourages individuals or groups to clean up county highway roadways and recognizes those volunteers.

KEY POINTS:

- Cayuga County maintains approximately 560 miles of county-owned roads and 43 county-owned bridges. Additionally, Cayuga County plows and sands approximately 125 miles of state-owned highways.
- Volunteer groups, organizations, businesses or individuals may adopt a segment of highway as long as there are no other adopters of that segment.
- An adopted highway segment is usually two miles long but this length may vary.
- Cayuga County Department of Public Works determines that the requested segment to be adopted is safe for voluntary beautification.
- Adopters agree to perform at least two pick-ups each year.
- Adopters must be at least 12 years-old; adopters from 12 years-old to 17 years-old must be accompanied by a guardian.
- Proposed adopters must enter into formal agreements with Cayuga County DPW.
- Each Adopt-A-Highway agreement is for two years and is renewable provided the adopters have functioned in accordance with their previous agreement.
- Adopt-A-Highway agreements may be terminated if the adopters fail to perform in accordance with the signed agreement.
- The Department reserves the right to deny participation to any proposed adopters whose participation would not be in the best interest of Cayuga County.
- The Cayuga County Department of Public Works' Highway Division collects and properly disposes of the litter the adopters have collected.

WHO CAN ADOPT A NEW YORK STATE HIGHWAY?

Any business or organization may adopt a highway. On occasion, individuals or families adopt highways. The County of Cayuga welcomes civic, fraternal, service, youth, senior citizen, scout, school, church, synagogue and neighborhood organizations.

WHAT MUST ADOPTERS DO?

Adopters are asked to commit to picking up litter along the section of county highway, which is usually two miles long, at least two times a year for two years. Adopters may plant flowers and other NYSDOT-approved vegetation. Adopters may also keep the proceeds they earn from any recyclable trash.

WHAT DOES THE COUNTY'S HIGHWAY DIVISION DO?

The DPW must first determine that the section of highway to be adopted is suitable for adoption. Once that has been determined and the adoption agreement has been signed, the DPW will notify local media that the adopters have been awarded custody of a county highway. Before the first litter pick-up, the DPW will conduct the requisite safety briefings; outfit the adopters with the appropriate orange safety gear; provide trash bags for roadside clean-up; pick up at a central location the litter the adopters have collected; and, properly disposes of the trash that was collected. The Department will also erect a blue-and-white Adopt-A-Highway sign within the adopted highway to acknowledge the adopters.

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY SAFETY CHECKLIST

- Absolutely no horseplay!!!!!!
- Adopters must never walk on the guide rail.
- Adopters are to stay off the underside of overhead bridges.
- Adopters may not lean over bridge railings.
- Adopters must always face on-coming traffic.
- Adopters are not to park their vehicles on roadways or shoulders.
- Adopters must wear orange shirts or vests and hard hats at all times.
- Adopters are to wear long pants and the appropriate gloves on the job; NYSDOT recommends leather shoes or boots rather than sneakers.
- Adopters must never pick up needles, syringes, jagged glass, animal carcasses or heavy objects. Adopters are not to pick up anything that could be hazardous. If adopters have any doubt about whether or not they should touch anything, they are to call the DPW's Adopt-A-Highway contact person immediately.
- All 12-to-17 year-old adopters must be supervised; there must be at least one supervisor for every six 12-to-17 year-olds.
- There will be no activity of any kind by adopters on the roadway surface or shoulders.
- Adopters may not engage in horseplay or other such activity that might jeopardize the adopters' safety or distract motorists.
- Adopters should have a first aid kit with them and transportation should be available at all times.
- Adopters should avoid over exertion; make arrangements to provide drinking water in hot weather.
- If adopters operate or are near someone who is operating power equipment, they must wear eye protection as well as ear protection.
- Adopters who are not using power equipment themselves are to stay well clear of mowing and trimming operations.
- Adopters should clear debris such as rocks and glass from areas to be mowed.

WHOM TO CONTACT

Contact the Cayuga County Department of Public Works – Highway Division at 315-253-1366.