



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

3536 North Valley Pike
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22802
TEL (540) 434-2587

April 18, 2014

Adrie Voors
VA Master Naturalists

Dear Adrie:

Enclosed is the VDOT's Adopt-a-Highway Program information that you requested. We are very proud of our program, and hope you will join the more than 6,000 groups and individuals in Virginia who also have decided to adopt a highway. In Rockingham County, more than 500 miles have already been adopted.

Adopt-a-Highway Program volunteers can take great pride in their efforts for several reasons:

- * Virginia's roadsides are cleaner, beautifying the state not only for residents, but for the thousands of tourists who visit the Old Dominion each year;
- * VDOT is able to more effectively use its employees and taxpayers' dollars for other highway maintenance activities;
- * Volunteers are actively promoting positive environmental programs, such as the recycling of aluminum cans, glass, etc. that they pick up -- and they can keep the money received for recycling. Plus, it's great exercise and it's fun being with family and friends!

Please call me at (540) 434-2587 or email sandraj.king@vdot.virginia.gov If you have any questions. Thanks again for your interest -- it is through citizens such as yourself that we can work together to keep Virginia beautiful!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Sandy King'.

Sandra J. King, Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator
Harrisonburg Residency /Rockingham/Page/Augusta County



VIRGINIA'S ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY PROGRAM Fact Sheet

The Adopt-A-Highway Program is a great way to bring neighbors, and neighborhoods, together – beautifying the area while building community loyalty and pride!

Adopt-a-Highway:

The Virginia Department of Transportation's (VDOT's) Adopt-a-Highway Program, begun in the fall of 1988, is one of the largest in the nation with nearly 6,300 groups, businesses, families, or individuals participating, totaling more than 50,000 volunteers.

Adopt-a-Highway volunteers clean nearly 14,500 miles of highways – nearly 30 percent of the Virginia's state maintained roads – and have provided the equivalent of millions of dollars in litter-control services to the state.

VDOT's program has been nationally recognized because of the successful partnership between VDOT and Virginia volunteers. The program placed First four years in a row (1991 – 1994) in Keep Virginia Beautiful's State/Federal Category for litter control programs, was a finalist in the 1993 Keep America Beautiful national competition, and has twice won national recognition in the Take Pride in America competition. In 1994, the program won first place in the Keep America Beautiful competition and was recognized by the Federal Highway Administration/Keep America Beautiful, Inc. for "Superior Progress in the Prevention and Collection of Litter."

Benefits to Virginia:

VDOT can use maintenance funds more effectively and VDOT workers can focus their efforts on other maintenance activities that make our roads safer.

Volunteers beautify Virginia by helping keep our roadsides clean. This in turn attracts visitors, producing tourist dollars and business revenues for the Commonwealth. When we preserve Virginia's environment, the whole state benefits!

Children and young adults who pick up litter with family and friends learn valuable lessons that can lead to life-long environmental awareness.

Seeing the efforts of thousands of volunteers often make motorists think twice before carelessly discarding their trash.

The Adopt-a-Highway Program also increases the pride that Virginians feel for their state and their communities.

Eligibility Requirements:

It costs nothing, and anyone can adopt – Scout troops, families, individuals, businesses, church groups, friends, as examples.

Volunteers pick up litter along two miles of state-maintained roads, four times a year for two years. They are asked to report their work to VDOT after each pickup.

Virginia Department of Transportation

In return, VDOT provides the quickly recognizable and colorful Adopt-a-Highway signs at both ends of their designated route, safety information and orange vests, and orange garbage bags in which to collect the litter. Volunteers also receive a certificate of appreciation for their efforts at the end of their two-year service.

For more details, call your local VDOT residency, whose number normally can be found in the State Government section of your telephone book, or call the toll-free Adopt-a-Highway information line at 1-800-PRIDE VA (1-800-774-3382). And thank you for your interest!

(Rev. 10/98)

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Transportation

Adopt-a-Highway Program

3536 North Valley Pike

Harrisonburg, Virginia 22802

TEL: 540-434-2587

Adopt-a-Highway - Pick up Reporting

Dear Adopt-a-Highway Participant,

We thank you for doing your part to keep Virginia beautiful! Your contribution to the environment is important to us. We ask that the stretch of road you've adopted be maintained at least *four times* each year and that you commit to a highway adoption of at least three (3) years. Reporting your pick up is the only way VDOT can track group activity. Lack of activity could result in loss of the adopted site. Be sure to use one of the following three ways to report your pickup;

- A. By Internet: (<http://www.virginiadot.org/programs/prog-aah-report.asp>)
- B. By Phone: 1-800-PRIDE VA / (1-800-774-3382)
- C. By Mail: VDOT provides pick up cards for mail in reporting or you can list the following and mail in your pick up:
 - ✓ Name of Adopting Group
 - ✓ Permit Number
 - ✓ County
 - ✓ Route / Road Name
 - ✓ Pick Up Date
 - ✓ # of Participants
 - ✓ # of Hours Worked
 - ✓ # of Bags
 - ✓ Type of Trash: Cans / Styrofoam, Fast Food Containers, Etc.
 - ✓ Report any hazardous material encountered (*Please do not pick up Hazardous Material. Please report it As Soon As Possible. VDOT will send a crew to handle any dangerous or hazardous material.*)
AND finally;
 - ✓ Whether or not VDOT needs to pick up and dispose of the bags

Again, we thank you for your participation and look forward to hearing from you in the near future. Please feel free to contact the Augusta, Rockingham & Page County Adopt-a-Highway Coordinator at (540) 434-2587 if you have any questions.

Adopt-a-Highway Safety Guidelines



Before you pick up

- You must hold at least one safety meeting per year (attended by everyone picking up your highway) to review VDOT-supplied safety information and other guidelines.
- Carpool to the pickup site to keep roadside parking to a minimum. Park as far from the road's edge as possible.
- Adopting groups must provide at least one adult supervisor for every six children under 18 years old.
- Children under 10 years old may participate in pickups only if the Residency Administrator has given the group a special permit. If the Residency Administrator has not done this, call your local VDOT Contact Person before bringing children under 10 years old to the pickup.

The best time to pick up

- Do not pick up during peak travel times or when traffic is heavy.
- Work only in daylight and fair weather.
- Never participate in a litter pickup while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol.

What to wear

- Always wear an orange safety vest so drivers can see you easily. Put on the vest before you leave the car, so you are visible the moment you are on the side of the road.
- In addition to the orange vest, wear brightly colored clothing that protects your arms and legs, as well as hard-soled shoes and work or gardening gloves.
- Wear heavy gloves when removing temporary signs in case there are sharp edges. If you remove signs attached to poles within the right of way, wear safety glasses and use an appropriate tool to do it safely.

During pickups

- Always put up or open the "Cleanup Crew Working" signs before cleaning, and close the signs after you've finished that day's pickup.
- Always walk facing traffic, and stay with the team.
- Take breaks, drink fluids, and don't overexert yourself.
- Do not pick up litter in the road or close to the edge of the road. Do not pick up litter on median strips unless you have received permission from the Residency Administrator to do so.
- Do not pick up litter in construction or maintenance sites, in tunnels, or on bridges or overpasses. Leave that for VDOT.

(over)

- Do not pick up litter or remove signs beyond your adopted section. Stay within the area marked by your safety signs.
- Watch for snakes and poisonous weeds.
- If you find materials that appear to be hazardous, call your local fire department or dial 911.

Interstate and interchange adoptions

- Do not park anywhere along an interstate or interchange.
- Clean only one side of your stretch of adopted interstate highway.
- Participants in an interstate highway pickup must be at least 18 years old.
- Walk facing traffic with the highway to your right.
- Do not pick up on the interstate highway median strip.
- Do not cross the interstate highway for **any** reason.

Removing signs within the right of way

- If signs are placed within the state right of way without permission from VDOT, you may remove them from within your adopted section only. However, some sign owners have received permits to place the signs where they are. Please first check with your local VDOT office about whether the signs are there illegally and to be certain you know the right of way boundaries. Signs on private property should not be removed.
- Have the authorization letter from the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner available for inspection. Contact your local Adopt-a-Highway coordinator if you do not have a copy of the letter.
- Be cautious when removing signs. (See “What to wear” above).



Adopt-a-Highway General Conditions

1. The Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) is offering for "adoption" certain two-mile sections of state-maintained highways. Before offering these roadways, VDOT determines that they are safe and appropriate for adoption.
2. Under special circumstances, sections of road less than two miles long and dead-end roads may be adopted. Contact the local VDOT Adopt-a-Highway coordinator for details.
3. The local Adopt-a-Highway coordinator is the VDOT contact for adopting groups and individuals. Interested persons and groups should contact the coordinator at the local VDOT Residency office listed in the telephone book or online at www.VDOT.Virginia.gov. Information is also available by calling 1-800-PRIDE-VA or by e-mailing AdoptaHighway@VDOT.Virginia.gov
4. Local businesses, informal groups and formal organizations, such as civic, social or school groups, may adopt highways. VDOT will print the names of the organization or the adopting group in block letters on the blue and white Adopt-a-Highway signs. No slogans or logos are allowed.
5. Individuals 18 years old or older may adopt highways (please see the "Safety Conditions" on the back for rules regarding participants under 18 years old).
6. Adopting groups agree to pick up litter on both sides of the roadway at least four times a year.
7. Participants adopt for a period of three years, after which they may renew their contract, modify their contract (example: choose a different section of highway), or end their contract.
8. The adopting organization's Contact Person is responsible for ensuring that ANYONE who participates in a pickup under the adopting organization's permit has first received VDOT-supplied safety information, safety vest and trash bags.
9. The organization's Contact Person must visit a VDOT residency or area maintenance headquarters at least a week before a scheduled pickup. At that time, VDOT will supply the Contact Person with safety information, safety vests, and plastic trash bags for every member of the adopting group's cleanup crew.
10. On a group's original application and throughout a group's involvement with the Adopt-a-Highway program, the Contact Person in the group must inform VDOT of the ages of ANYONE under 18 years old who will participate in any of the group's pickups. This requirement includes children of the group's members, or any other children who are allowed by the adopting group to participate in a pickup.
11. The Contact Person also is responsible for notifying VDOT-- on the original application and throughout the group's involvement in the adoption--if any of the group's participants has a condition that might necessitate special safety precautions (example: if a pickup participant uses a wheelchair).
12. Within seven to nine weeks of approving an adopting group's application, VDOT will provide the group with large orange mesh "Cleanup Crew Working" signs to place under the Adopt-a-Highway sign during each pick up.
13. VDOT will pay for producing, installing and maintaining the blue Adopt-a-Highway signs.
14. If the adopting group does not plan to dispose of the filled trash bags, the Contact Person must notify the local VDOT office of the date and location of the intended pickup so that VDOT can schedule a work crew to dispose of the trash bags during the following week.
15. VDOT encourages participants to separate and recycle materials.
16. After each pickup, the Contact Person must complete a Pickup Report Card (pre-addressed cards that are furnished by VDOT at the time of adoption) and send it to the local VDOT residency via U.S. mail or online at www.VDOT.Virginia.gov. Pickups can also be reported by calling the 1-800-PRIDE-VA line or by e-mailing AdoptaHighway@VDOT.Virginia.gov. When making a Pickup Report, the Contact Person should report the permit number of the adoption, the number of people who participated in the pickup, the number of bags of litter collected, and the number of man-hours spent (man-hours = the number of hours taken to complete the pickup multiplied by the number of participants). If a Contact Person is out of Pickup Report Cards, he or she should call the local Adopt-a-Highway coordinator to report the pickup and to order more cards. It is vital that the Contact Person report the pickup so the adopting organization can get proper credit for keeping Virginia beautiful.
17. VDOT encourages Adopt-a-Highway participants to schedule one of their four yearly pickups during April and one pickup in the fall to coincide with the spring "Historic Garden Week" and the autumn "Great State Trash-Off".
18. The Adopt-a-Highway coordinator will monitor the program in his or her area. VDOT reserves the right to deny an adoption request or cancel the adoption permit of any group, individual or business, based on any of these criteria:
 - A. Concern for the safety of the participants, passing motorists or VDOT employees,
 - B. Expenses to VDOT above the normal Adopt-a-Highway program expenses, or
 - C. Effectiveness of the participants' litter-control efforts.
19. VDOT reserves the right to limit the number of adoptions for a single group and to limit shared adoptions to areas of identified need. For shared adoptions, each group must file a separate permit and participate in four pickups annually.

Adopt-a-Highway Safety Conditions

1. Before a group applies to adopt a particular highway, the group's Contact Person should examine the road on the days and during the hours that the group intends to perform pickups to determine if roadside conditions during those times are appropriate for the ages and abilities of the group's members.

Once the group has adopted a particular roadway, if at any time it feels its adopted section of highway has become unsafe for litter pickups, the group's Contact Person must call the local VDOT Adopt-a-Highway coordinator. Local VDOT Residency offices are listed in the telephone book and online at www.VDOT.Virginia.gov. Groups may also report unsafe conditions by calling 1-800-PRIDE-VA. VDOT will assign the group a section of roadway with which it is more comfortable.

2. Participants must hold at least one safety meeting per year to review VDOT-supplied safety information. No one may participate in a pickup unless he or she has attended this meeting within the last 12 months. The participating group may hold the safety meeting immediately before a pickup; however, this meeting must be held in a safe, appropriate area, such as a parking lot.

3. The participants are responsible for putting up or opening the "Cleanup Crew Working" signs before each pickup, and for removing or closing the sign after they have finished that day's pickup. These signs alert passing motorists that Adopt-a-Highway volunteers are on the side of the road ahead. If the signs are left in place when no pickups are being conducted, motorists will begin to ignore the signs, creating a serious safety risk for Adopt-a-Highway volunteers when they are on the roadside.
4. Adopt-a-Highway groups must provide at least one adult supervisor for every six children under 18 years old. For example: a group of between one and six children would need one supervisor, and a group of between seven and 12 children would need two adult supervisors.
5. Groups with participants under 10 years old may adopt highways only when the Residency Administrator has determined: (1) that the specified roadway is safe and appropriate for adoption by that particular group, and (2) that the adopting group and its supervising adults are capable of conducting the pickup in a safe and effective manner.

Please refer to the Safety Guidelines sheet for more details.

Specific Conditions for Adopting Interstate Highways and Highway Interchanges

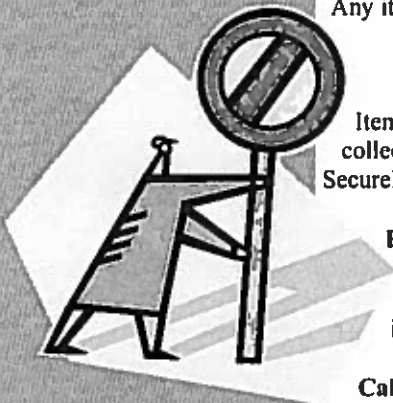
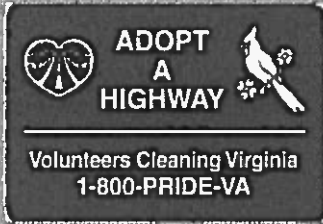
Groups or individuals may adopt certain interstate highway interchanges, sections of interstate highways and high-speed primary highways, providing the adoption is specifically approved by the Residency Administrator, and provided the participants observe the following additional conditions:

1. An interstate highway adoption may consist only of one side of the entire length of an interstate between two distinctly separate interchanges. Adopting both sides of an interstate requires two separate adoptions.
2. Participants must be at least 18 years old.
3. Before the first pickup, the Contact Person must submit in writing, for approval by the Residency Administrator, the method of conducting the pickup, including: where the participants will park their vehicles (they may not be parked on the interstate shoulder, within the interchange or anywhere within the rights of way of the main road) and the method of disposing of the collected litter.

4. The Contact Person must notify the local VDOT Adopt-a-Highway coordinator of an intended pickup at least one week before the pickup.
5. Participants must not pick up litter on any interstate highway median strip.
6. When cleaning an interstate, participants must walk facing traffic, with the highway to the right.
7. Participants must not cross the interstate highway for any reason.

All other rules, conditions and safety precautions listed above are in force for interstate and interchange adoptions.

VDOT reserves the right to revise these conditions as needed.



Bag It, Move It, Leave It or Report it?

Adopt-a-Highway instructions for handling roadside litter & Identifying Illicit Discharge

If you've ever wondered what to do with something you've found on the roadside, consult the list below to find out whether it is an item you should bag, an item you should move and stack alongside your stacked bags an item you should leave where you found it or an item you should report immediately. Make a note of any item you are leaving and mark it with a trash bag if you think a VDOT crew would have trouble finding it.

Bag It

- Small items made of paper, cardboard, plastic
- Styrofoam, wood, rubber, glass, or metal provided that the item does not have sharp edges.
- Small, empty containers provided they don't have sharp edges.

Move It

- Items with dull, pointed edges that might tear a bag.
- Large items that would prevent a bag from being properly tied closed.
- Heavy items that could tear a bag, provided that the item can be moved without causing physical injury.
- Containers that are not empty if the contents won't spill when moved and you can identify the product as one that is not hazardous. If you suspect that an item contains urine, do not move it.

If in doubt, leave it alone!

Leave It

These items should be left where found without taking further action:

Sharp, large, or heavy items that could cause physical injury if moved.

Any item in an unsafe location (within six feet of a traffic lane, on unstable ground, etc.).

Report these items to your local VDOT office that day, or on the next working day, during normal business hours.

Items you are not permitted to bag or move that will not be easily visible to the VDOT crew collecting your filled bags. If possible place a filled bag near to the item to mark its location. Securely close items containing hazardous substances.*

Report these items to your local VDOT office that same day. If you are unable to speak directly with a VDOT employee, call 911 to report the item:

Any item that you cannot identify and suspect may be hazardous. Unclosed or leaking items containing hazardous substances.*

Call 911 if you find the following kinds of items. If you do not have access to a cell phone then someone other than your group leader must leave the site to make a call. Then, unless advised to leave the area, the leader must stay at the site until a law enforcement officer or VDOT representative arrives.

- Items with a hazardous material label.*
- Items that could pose an immediate danger.*
- Items that could be crime-scene evidence.*
- Items emitting a strong odor.*

*** Keep a safe distance away from the item and do not disturb it in any way!**

Items of Concern

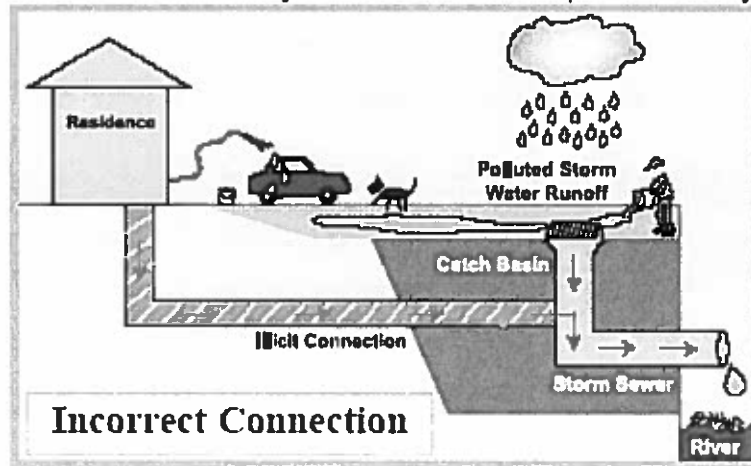
Item	Leave It	Leave It and Call VDOT During Business Hours	Leave It and Call VDOT That Day	Leave It and Call 911 Immediately
Miscellaneous Items				
Broken glass	✓			
Any item you cannot identify and suspect of being hazardous			✓	
Hazardous Substances				
Spills of liquid and powdery substances			✓	
Fuels		✓ (If securely contained)	✓ (If opened and leaking)	
Motor oils, transmission fluid, petroleum products		✓ (If securely contained)	✓ (If opened and leaking)	
Antifreeze		✓ (If securely contained)	✓ (If opened and leaking)	
Batteries		✓ (If securely contained)	✓ (If opened and leaking)	
Flares		✓		
Paint		✓ (If securely contained)	✓ (If opened and leaking)	
Aerosol can (not empty)		✓		
Human urine, feces, blood waste (gauze, etc.)		✓ (If securely contained)	✓ (If opened and leaking)	
Syringes, labeled medicines (aspirin, prescription drugs, etc.)		✓		
Animal carcasses		✓		
Extremely Hazardous Items / Possible Crime Scene Evidence				
Bloody items that may be crime scene evidence				✓
Explosives, possible bombs (capped pipes, wrapped packages, etc.)				✓
Weapons (guns, knives, etc.) unspent ammunition				✓
Items with hazardous material labels				✓
Unlabeled medicines or medicine bottles, marijuana, drug paraphernalia				✓
Animals that may have been poached				✓
Propane gas tanks				✓
Full cat litter bags				✓
Containers of acid			✓	
Items put together with duct tape			✓	
Containers with tubing attached				✓
Closed tool boxes or coolers				✓

How to identify Illicit Discharges

The main purpose of detecting illicit discharge is to improve the quality of water flowing into our rivers, lakes, and streams.

What is Illicit Discharge?

Any discharge to the storm sewer system that is not composed entirely of storm water.



Examples of Illicit Discharge:

Sanitary Wastewater, Gas & Motor Oil, Household Cleaners, Paints, Pesticides, Solvents, Vehicle Spills, Weed Killers, Radiator Flushing disposal, Laundry Wastewaters.



Does the discharge have a distinct odor?

Some smells coming from an outfall pipe are an immediate indicator of an illicit discharge, for example, sewage, gasoline, or chemical smell should be reported.



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How to identify Illicit Discharges

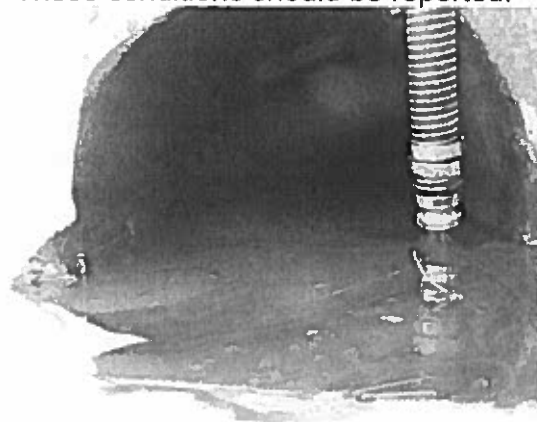
Is the water cloudy or full of sediment?

Gray water that should be treated at a sewage treatment plant may cause a cloudy appearance in the discharged water. A construction site without proper storm water best management practices could be discharging sediment to a storm drain. These conditions should be reported.



Is there anything floating in the discharge?

Soapsuds and oil sheens are examples of floatables that may be found in an illicit discharge. These conditions should be reported.



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How to identify Illicit Discharges

What color is the discharge?

An abnormally colored discharge is a good indication that there is an illicit connection to the storm water conveyance system. If an abnormal color is noticed, it should be reported.



Is there excessive vegetation around the outfall pipe?


Excessive vegetation around the outfall pipe as opposed to the surrounding area is an indication of increased nutrients in the storm water and could be from fertilizers and should be reported.



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VDOT

Adopt-A-Highway




**ADOPT
A
HIGHWAY**

Volunteers Cleaning Virginia
1-800-PRIDE-VA

For additional copies or more information, please contact:
Office of Public Affairs
Virginia Department of Transportation
1401 E. Broad St.
Richmond, VA 23219

adoptahighway@VDOT.Virginia.gov
www.VDOT.Virginia.gov
1-800-PRIDE-VA (774-3382)
(TTY users only, call 711)

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On the cover: Amelia County High School
Future Farmers of America volunteers



What is Adopt-a-Highway?

Adopt-a-Highway is a program launched by the Virginia Department of Transportation in 1988. Volunteer groups and individuals "adopt" a two-mile or longer stretch of roadway and make a two-year commitment to pick up the trash at least four times a year.

Rockbridge County volunteer

Who can adopt?

Anyone can adopt a highway – families, businesses, civic and church groups, or even individuals. Children can participate with adult supervision as long as the adopted road is not an interstate or interchange.

Why Adopt?

The program gives you a way to show pride in your community. You also get recognition for your efforts on the Adopt-a-Highway signs along your adopted route. Picking up trash along the roadway is an easy, team-building project that takes no financial commitment and only a few hours each quarter.



How does it work?

Your group picks a convenient date each quarter and everyone works together to pick up trash along your route. VDOT provides the signs, trash bags, bright orange vests and safety information. You can leave the bags along the side of the road for VDOT to pick up, or you can turn recyclables in for cash.

Adopt me!

Adopt-a-Highway volunteers clean more than 13,000 miles of highways – about one-quarter of Virginia's state-maintained roads. But there still are plenty of roads up for adoption. To find out what roads are most in need of adoption, check VDOT's Web site at www.VDOT.Virginia.gov

How do I get started?

Just call 1-800-PRIDE-VA or e-mail us at adoptahighway@VDOT.Virginia.gov, and we will put you in touch with your local Adopt-a-Highway coordinator who can give you all the details.

Future Farmers of America volunteer
from Amelia County High School.

