

## Mowing in Developed Areas

Grass in developed areas is mowed on a schedule that will maintain a neat appearance and most of the right-of-way is mowed. KDOT will spray areas that cannot be safely mowed with herbicides to control noxious weeds and other unwanted vegetation.

## Wildflowers And Native Grasses

Wildflowers and native grasses are at home on many Kansas roadways. They grow on steep slopes, rocky areas, and in large meadow-like areas where mowing is not necessary. They help brighten the view, add variety and create "Kansas Character." Once established, they also cost less to maintain. KDOT's wildflower signs emphasize their locations and will communicate a special mowing policy for protected areas of the roadway.

## Haying Permits

The savings from this roadside management program allow more time and money to be spent on state highways and bridges. Farmers and adjacent landowners are able to harvest hay from the roadside at no cost. Any person, firm or corporation wanting to mow and bale hay will need a permit from the KDOT office in their area. Permits are good for one year, or a specific haying season. Adjacent landowners will be given first priority if they apply for a permit by March 31 of a given year.

# Kansas Department of Transportation

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Topeka, KS 66603-3754

## Construction and Maintenance

(785) 296-3576

## Environmental Services

(785) 296-0853

### DISTRICT 1

#### *Northeast*

121 W. 21st  
Topeka, KS  
(785) 296-3881

### DISTRICT 4

#### *Southeast*

411 W. 14th  
Chanute, KS  
(620) 431-1000

### DISTRICT 2

#### *North Central*

1006 N. Third  
Salina, KS  
(785) 823-3754

### DISTRICT 5

#### *South Central*

500 N. Hendricks  
Hutchinson, KS  
(620) 663-3361

### DISTRICT 3

#### *Northwest*

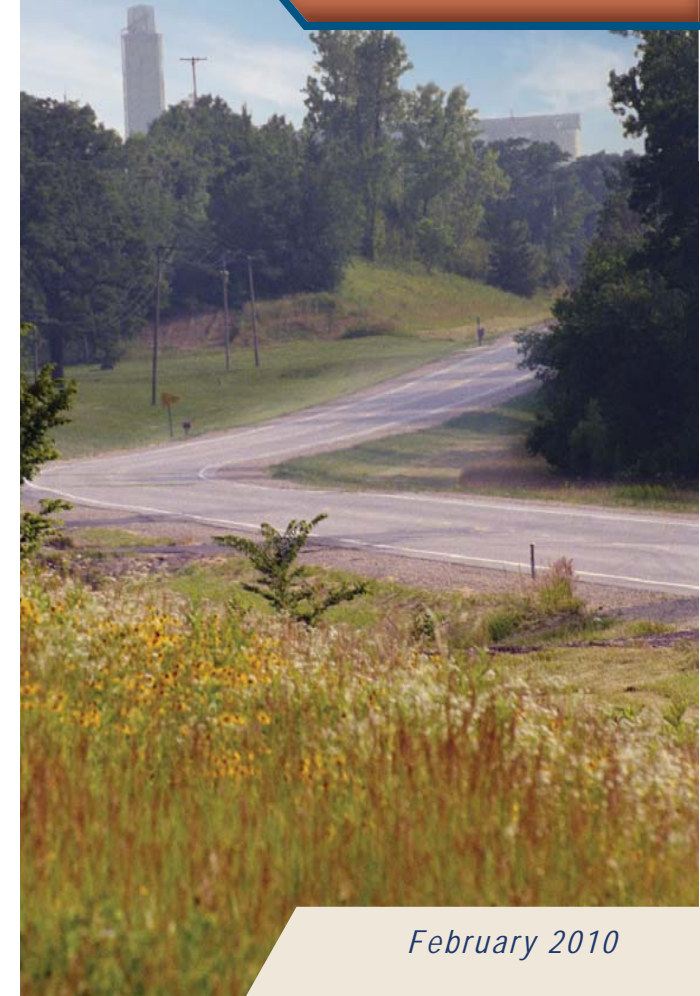
312 S. Second  
Norton, KS  
(785) 877-3315

### DISTRICT 6

#### *Southwest*

Campus Dr & US-50  
Garden City, KS  
(620) 276-3241

# Managing Kansas' Roadsides



February 2010

**KANSAS**  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) maintains more than 150,000 acres of highway right-of-way. That amounts to a lot of grass to mow, brush and weeds to control, and land to maintain.

Some of this roadside land is located in the medians of divided highways and the interiors of interchanges. Some of it borders homes and businesses.

To be a “good neighbor,” KDOT works closely with the Department of Wildlife and Parks, the Natural Resource Conservation Services and conservation groups to develop a responsive roadside management program.

**This program has benefitted many. Some of the major benefits of this policy include:**

- *Fewer accidents by KDOT mowers on dangerous slopes*
- *Reduced mowing saves money for tax payers and KDOT*
- *Pleasing roadside appearance*
- *Less erosion of roadsides*
- *Restricts growth of unwanted vegetation*
- *Provides cover for small wildlife*

KDOT spends approximately 6.7 million dollars annually on mowing. It is done for safety, vegetation control, improved drainage, and aesthetic reasons.

## Mowing in Undeveloped Areas

To save time and money, KDOT crews mow less frequently in undeveloped areas. KDOT also minimizes mowing on steep slopes. Danger to our employees and the extra maintenance needed to repair turf damage caused by sliding equipment are the main reasons. Cutting heights are prescribed to improve vegetation, increase equipment capacity, reduce flying objects, and avoid exposing small litter to view.

KDOT's mowers are generally set for a 6-inch cut for mowing the shoulder strip. Highway right-of-way in undeveloped areas is mown approximately 15 feet from the pavement edge. Areas outside the shoulder edge mowing are not mowed between April 15th and October 1st. This helps protect ground nesting wildlife in the spring and aids in the sustainability of the native grasses and wildflowers by allowing them to go to seed. These areas are mowed out on a four year cycle with an 8-inch cut, but both sides of the road are usually not mowed in the same year.

Reducing mowing while increasing the cutting height strengthens the sod and provides a healthier turf.

## Property Adjacent To The Highway

These areas left unmown for wildflower growth and wildlife cover may concern adjacent landowners. KDOT makes an effort to keep these area free of unwanted vegetation. Landowners are allowed to mow the right-of-way in front of their property to be consistent with how they maintain the rest of their front yard. They are asked to use caution when mowing close to the edge of the highway and keep the safety of themselves and the traveling public in mind at all times. Landscape improvements may be allowed on highway right-of-way by adjacent landowners by obtaining a permit from any local KDOT office.

## Mowing For Visibility

Mowing is done at specific times during the year, but also as often as necessary for motorist's safety. KDOT is especially concerned with mowing for visibility in area around all intersections throughout the state. Mowing is also done around road signs and on the inside of curves.