



Department of Transportation

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MEMORANDUM

Date: January 29, 2009
To: Aaron Olson, Legislative Research Council
From: Darin Bergquist, Secretary, Department of Transportation
Subject: Joint Appropriations information request

During our budget hearing, which was held on January 22, 2009 there was some additional information requested.

1. Representative Putnam and Tidemann were asking about the policy on mowing and if there are differences between the criteria with Interstate mowing vs. Highway mowing and what the timeframes are that mowing can occur.

There are really only minor differences with mowing between Interstate and State Highways, but there are differences between a normal two lane roadway and a roadway with a median. The main difference is that mowing in the median can be done by state forces, or by contract mowing. We are trying to move away from allowing contract mowing in the median due to safety concerns for the mowers and the traveling public. I would note that one needs to apply for a permit to mow along the Interstate.

The dates for mowing by the public are the same regardless of the type of roadway. We have a maintenance standard that prescribes the general situations when and where we will mow.

Below is an administrative rule relating to mowing dates:

70:04:06:06. Start of mowing. No mowing of the right-of-way may begin in the west river counties of Gregory, Lyman, or Tripp before June 15 and east of the Missouri River before July 10. All mowing by permit must be completed by September 1 each year.

Mowing of the median by contract may begin on the date the contract is approved and must be performed during the hours between sunrise and sunset. The contractor shall notify the department 24 hours before beginning mowing.

The department may mow medians and areas within the rights-of-way prior to July 10 to control noxious weeds and provide increased safety to the traveling public.

2. Representative Ahlers and Burg asked a series of questions on fuel and tanks.

A. Do we have two tanks at each fueling site?

We have a diesel tank and a gasoline tank at each of our locations with the following exceptions:

Rapid City – three tanks (two diesel tanks and one gasoline tank)

Lemmon – one diesel tank

Junction City – one diesel tank

B. Does the state have E-10 in one of the tanks?

Per a 1996 Executive Order by Governor Janklow, the DOT was directed to “stock ethanol-blended fuel at its five major locations at Sioux Falls, Rapid City, Aberdeen, Mitchell, and Pierre whenever financially prudent to do so.” Terminal prices have shown that unleaded has been cheaper for the past few months, so we most likely would not have E-10 in our tanks at this time.

Lastly, the request was made by Representative Deadrick for a copy of the Diversion worksheet and explanation we provided to the Summer Study Committee, which is attached to this memo.

If you have any further questions, please give me a call.