

ENVIRONMENTAL SYNOPSIS

The Chairman's Corner

Rep. Scott E. Hutchinson, Chairman



Roadside aesthetics. The term may not be familiar but the results – either good or bad – of roadside aesthetics certainly are familiar to Pennsylvanians and to visitors alike.

Trash and litter along roadways are only a part of roadside aesthetics. Roadside plantings, roadside beautification and roadside landscaping are other important parts of what we know as roadside aesthetics.

The Joint Conservation Committee (committee) has joined with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (KPB) in seeking to improve roadside aesthetics in Pennsylvania. KPB is a statewide alliance working to promote and protect Pennsylvania's natural and community environments by cleaning up and preventing litter and illegal dumps, enhancing and beautifying Pennsylvania communities and promoting proper waste handling. The committee's first contact with KPB was when the organization's Executive Director Julia Marano spoke about KPB and the Great Pennsylvania Cleanup at the committee's March 2005 Environmental Issues Forum. Subsequently, the committee and KPB identified roadside aesthetics as a shared issue of concern, and the committee cosponsored an October 2005 Roadside Aesthetics summit meeting.

The committee has followed up on the summit by sponsoring a series of questions about Pennsylvania and its approach to roadside aesthetics in a statewide telephone survey. The Mansfield University Statewide Survey has been conducted annually since 1990, and the committee has historically sponsored a series of environmental questions as part of the survey. This year was no exception and the survey polled 1,102 Pennsylvanians on roadside aesthetics.

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The results of the 2006 Mansfield University Statewide Survey on roadside aesthetics can be found on pages 3 - 6

The complete results of the 2006 survey can be found on pages 3 – 6, but I'd like to offer a brief review and some observations about the responses here.

There appear to be two basic truths that can be gleaned from the survey results.

(continued on page 8)

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

CRAIG D. BROOKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The state's littering campaign began sometime in the early 1950's with the debut of the classic "Litterbug". Many of you may remember the "bug", which starred in statewide radio and television public service announcements and conveyed the anti-littering message with a catchy little tune. The campaign tried to create a link between children, parents and the proper way to dispose of trash. The Litterbug and its message still exist today, with an updated look, a toll-free hotline and some effective statewide partnerships with anti-littering organizations and state agencies.

Many of the state agencies here in the Commonwealth, including PennDOT, the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission and others



The "Litterbug"

spend millions of dollars each year in taxpayer money to pick up litter left by motorists along roadways, state parks, forests and highways. PennDOT alone spends over \$10 million cleaning up roadside litter each year.

U. S. surveys have found that about half of all litter is of deliberate origin, consisting mainly of packaging and products. The other half of litter appears to be

of accidental origin, resulting from uncovered trucks, unsecured loads, loss of vehicle parts, trashcan spills and simple human carelessness.

Several studies suggest that there are four different ways that litter is removed from roadsides. Homeowners, street and highway crews, and Adopt-a-Highway and other volunteer groups pick up about 40 percent of all litter. Another 24 percent is rarely picked up and either biodegrades or eventually photo degrades. Eighteen percent of all litter is washed into streams, rivers, lakes and the ocean by storm water runoff. The remaining 17 percent is gradually covered by soil buildup or decaying vegetation. So the material is not actually gone, it's just not visible.

Check out the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful website at www.keppabeautiful.com or the Great PA Cleanup website at www.greatpacleanup.org

To help in Pennsylvania's litter cleanup effort, volunteers across the state have participated in the Great PA Cleanup. This featured event for the past three years calls upon tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians to join together to help clean up our environment and beautify our state by removing litter and trash from our state's highways, parks, riverbanks and open spaces. It's a remarkable volunteer event that produces some very positive results. Last year, 140,000 volunteers cleaned up more than 11,000 miles of roadways, 12,000 acres of parklands and 3,500 miles of streams. This year's program focused on Audubon Pennsylvania and its Important Bird Area program. The cleanup efforts helped maintain more than 2 million acres of wilderness and urban bird habitats.

More information is available on litter programs, and the Great PA Cleanup through the Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful website at www.keppabeautiful.com or the Great PA Cleanup website at www.greatpacleanup.org.

SURVEY RESULTS

The Mansfield University Statewide Survey - 2006 Roadside Aesthetics



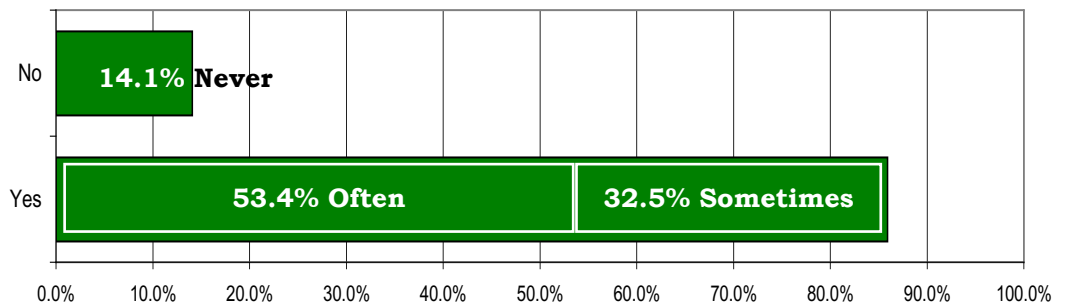
To learn more about what Pennsylvanians are thinking about the environment, the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee (committee) again commissioned a series of questions through the Mansfield University Statewide Survey 2006, an annual statewide telephone survey formerly known as "The Public Mind." This year, the committee's questions concerned roadside aesthetics. Read the Chairman's Corner on page one for more background on the committee's involvement with roadside aesthetics.

I. What Do People See on Pennsylvania Roadways...and Do They Like What They See?

The first question on the committee's mind was whether people noticed litter and trash on Pennsylvania's roadways. The answer was an emphatic "yes". As the accompanying chart (Chart 1) shows, more than 85 percent noticed it, and more than 53 percent noticed it often.

Chart 1

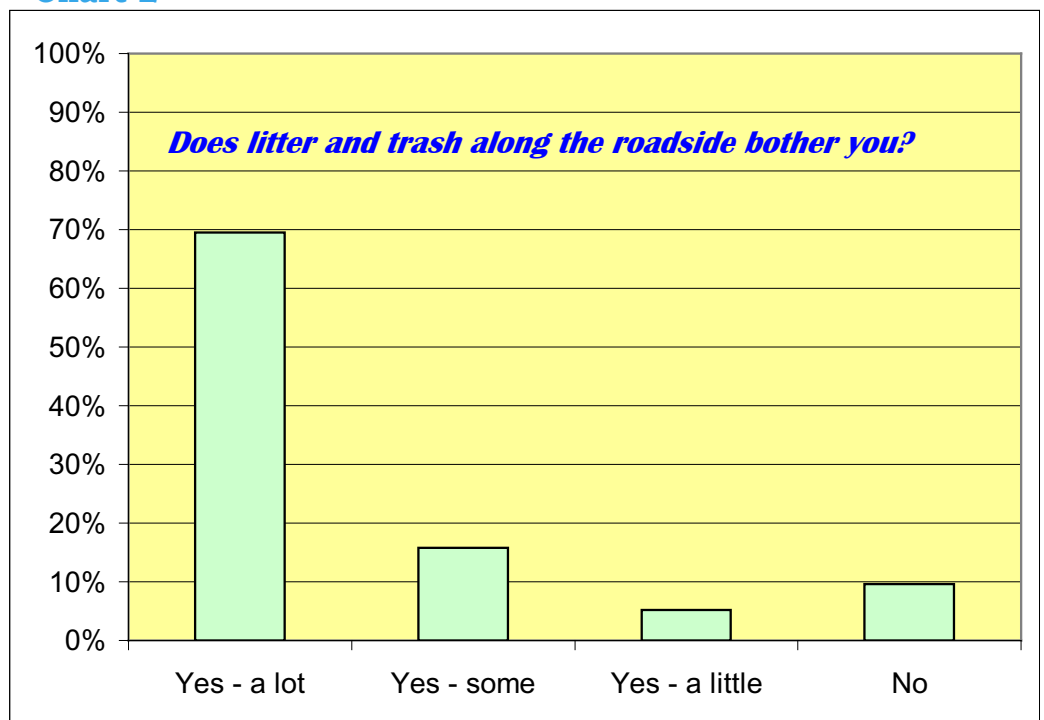
As you travel on Pennsylvania roadways, do you notice litter and trash along the roadside?



The next key question was whether the litter and trash bothered Pennsylvanians. Again, the response was an even more emphatic "yes". As Chart 2 shows, more than 90 percent were bothered by the mess. Perhaps just as significant, however, is that the single largest group (69.5 percent) was bothered "a lot" by Pennsylvania's roadside litter and trash.

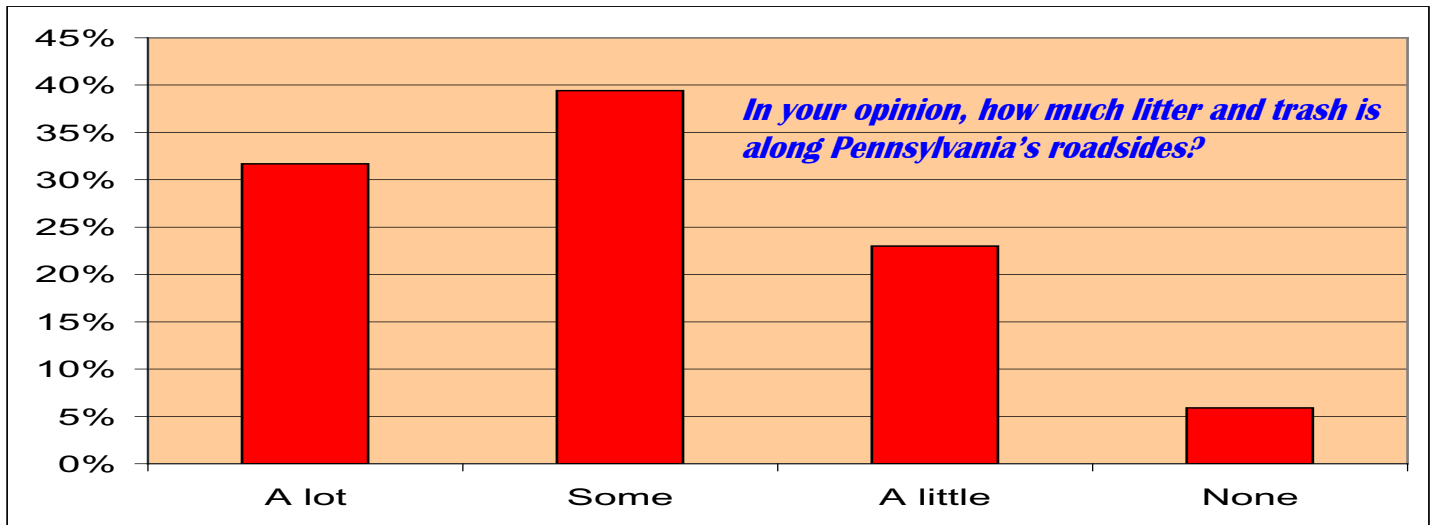
Just because one notices roadside litter and trash doesn't necessarily mean it presents a roadside aesthetics problem. However, in the survey, it was clear that in the eyes of the beholders, there was more than a little litter and trash.

Chart 2



In fact, as Chart 3 portrays, 31.7 percent thought there was a lot of flotsam and jetsam along Pennsylvania's roadways, and more than 71 percent thought there was either a lot or some. By comparison, only 23 percent thought there was only a little.

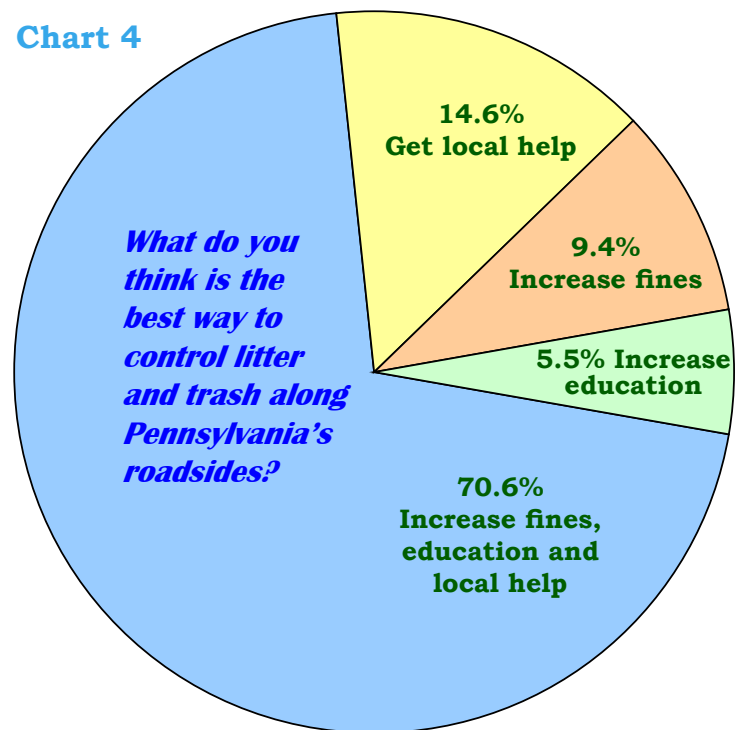
Chart 3



While opinion was split on how best to control litter and trash (see Chart 4), there was little doubt that Pennsylvania's roadside litter and trash problem was at least as severe as other states if not more so (Chart 5). Only 12.2 percent thought Pennsylvania had less roadside litter than other states, while 23.1 percent thought the commonwealth had more and 36.8 percent thought Pennsylvania was about the same as other states. Looked at in another way, that means 59.9 percent felt that Pennsylvania had at least as great a problem or more of a problem than other states.

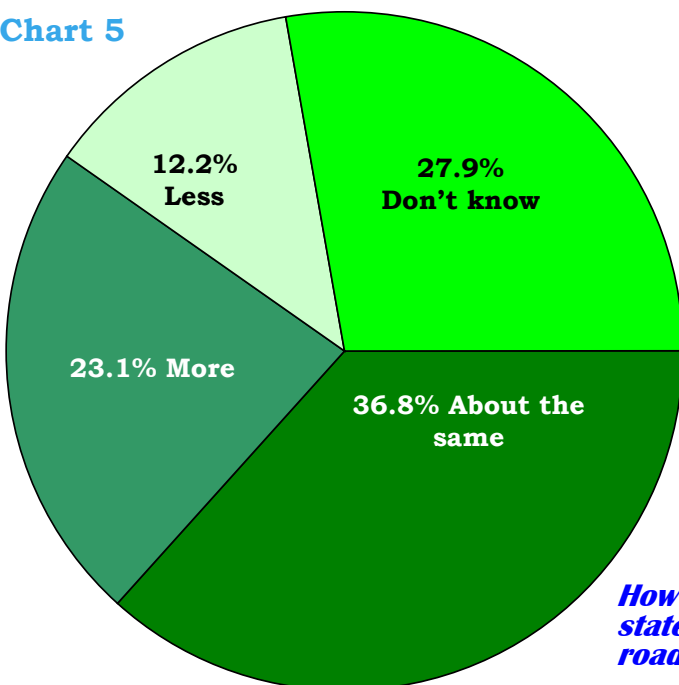
How to prevent and attack litter and trash is problematic based on the survey results. Clearly, an overwhelming majority of Pennsylvanians (69.4 percent) did

Chart 4



not feel that roadside signs had much of an effect on stopping littering. When asked what methods were most effective in stopping litter, no single method received anything close to strong support, however. While local involvement polled more strongly than either increased fines or increased education, more than 70 percent felt all of the above methods would have to be combined together to be effective.

Chart 5



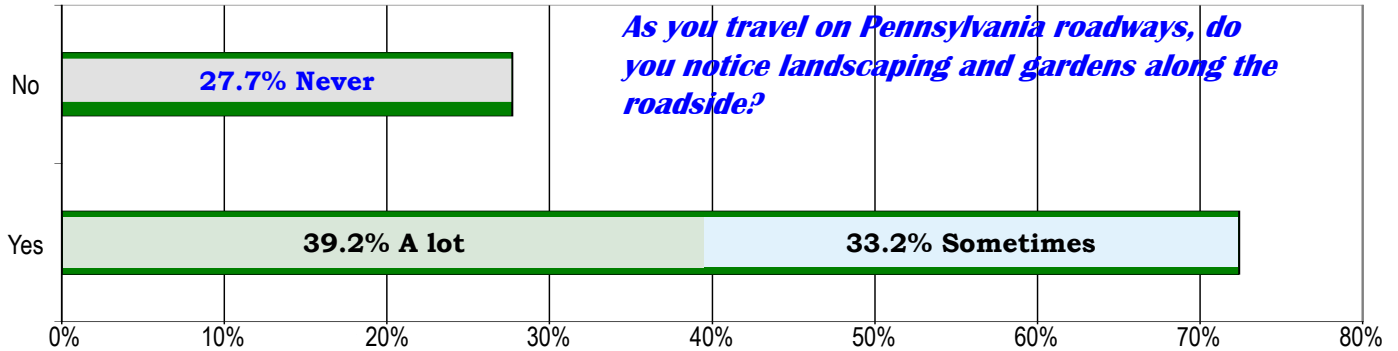
How does Pennsylvania compare with surrounding states in the amount of litter and trash along its roadsides?

II. Does Highway Landscaping Make an Aesthetic Difference?

The survey moved beyond the litter and trash problem into the issue of roadway landscaping and whether it was important, effective and noticeable.

In looking at the last issue first, it was clear that Pennsylvanians noticed landscaping and gardens – much as they did litter and trash – in significant numbers. In fact, more than 72 percent noticed landscaping and gardens along Pennsylvania’s highways (Chart 6).

Chart 6



The quality of Pennsylvania’s landscaping, both on its own merits and in comparison to other states, left something to be desired (Chart 7). Close to 55 percent found Pennsylvania’s landscaping efforts to be “average”. On a more optimistic note, approximately 26 percent gave Pennsylvania landscaping high marks, compared to 13 percent who rated the quality low.

How would you rank the quality and appeal of landscaping and gardens along Pennsylvania’s roadsides?

Chart 7

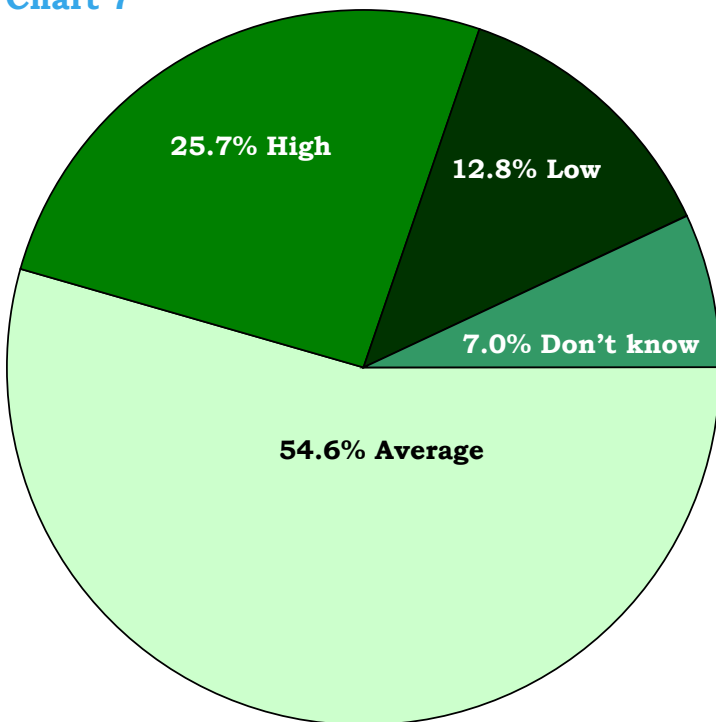
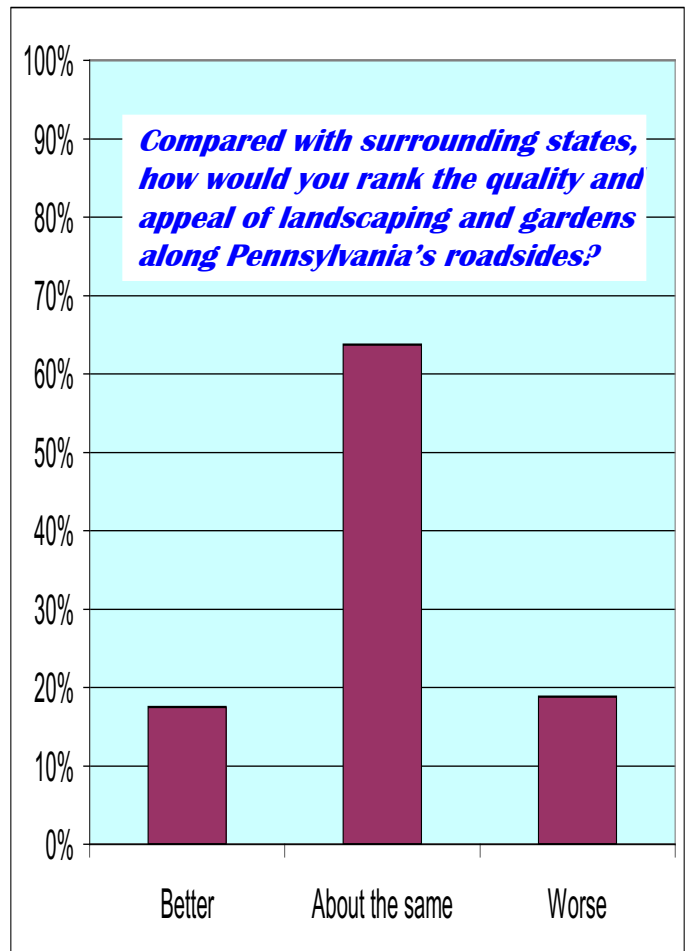


Chart 8



In comparison to other states, however, only 17.5 percent thought Pennsylvania did better than other states, while 18.8 percent felt Pennsylvania did worse. The overwhelming majority (63.7) thought Pennsylvania was pretty much middle of the road, doing about the same as other states. (See Chart 8.)

III. Economic and Community Impacts of Roadside Aesthetics

The importance of roadside aesthetics can perhaps be expressed simply by the raw numbers of Pennsylvanians who notice litter, trash and landscaping and whether they are pleased or bothered by what they see. The numbers speak for themselves.

However, the committee survey wished to ascertain whether the beautification of roadways had any effect on economics in Pennsylvania. Specifically, the survey asked Pennsylvanians if beautifying roadways would lead to more businesses and tourists. While not an overwhelming mandate, a majority – 53.2 percent – felt that it would (Chart 9). Only 35.8 percent felt that it would have no impact, while 11 percent weren't sure.

One method used in Pennsylvania and other states to make use of the potential economic and community impact of effective roadside aesthetics is to concentrate landscaping efforts at key locations. According to the survey results, which asked about the state's welcome centers and local community gateways, Pennsylvania is once again pretty middle of the road, no pun intended. As the accompanying chart (Chart 10) shows, in each case the most respondents felt the quality of Pennsylvania's landscaping efforts was average. The state's welcome centers got more high quality ratings than did the community gateways.

In your opinion, would beautifying state roadsides help attract businesses and tourists to Pennsylvania?

Chart 9

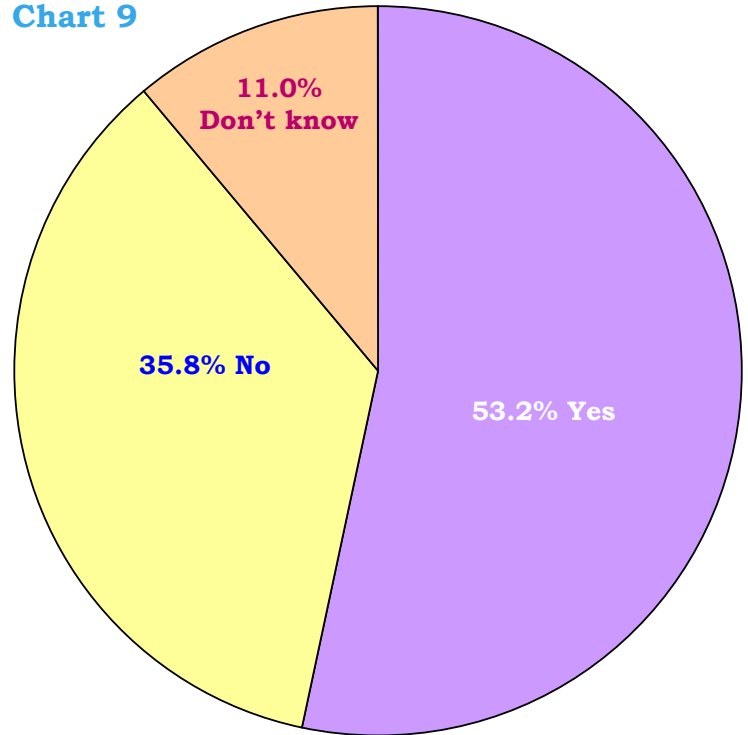


Chart 10

<i>How would you rank the quality and appeal of landscaping and gardens at...</i>	
Welcome Centers?	Town Gateways?
High – 33.1%	High – 21.6%
Average – 40.9%	Average – 45.4%
Low – 7.4%	Low – 10.2%
Don't know – 18.6%	Don't know – 22.8%

The Mansfield State Survey

The Mansfield State Survey is an annual statewide telephone survey, begun in 1990, of randomly selected Pennsylvania adults, which focuses upon issues facing the Pennsylvania General Assembly. The Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee has sponsored a series of environmental questions for a number of years.

A total of 1,102 Pennsylvanians were contacted for the 2006 survey. Respondents are proportionately represented in terms of geographical regions, sex and political party preference within the state to ensure an accurate sample. The margin of error in the 2006 survey is plus or minus 3.0 percent.

The 2006 survey was conducted under the direction of Mansfield University Professor of Sociology Dr. Timothy Madigan, PhD.

ON THE HORIZON . . .

A LOOK AT UPCOMING EVENTS

No events are scheduled at this time.

Environmental Issues Forums are open to the public. Please call the committee office at (717) 787-7570 if you would like to attend.

COMMITTEE CHRONICLES . . .

REVIEW OF SOME MEMORABLE
COMMITTEE EVENTS

The Joint Conservation Committee first took up the issue of roadside aesthetics by teaming up with Keep Pennsylvania Beautiful (KPB) to co-host a Roadside Aesthetics Summit in the fall of 2005. Pictured here are some scenes from the summit.

Guest speaker for the summit was the national Keep America Beautiful Program Director for Affiliate Services Carrie Gallagher Sussman (right), who described the programs and goals of the national organization.



At left, is part of the crowd who attended the summit listening to Sussman's presentation.



Key officials at the summit pose for a picture. From left to right are KPB Co-chairman Bill Heenan of the Steel Recycling Institute, Joint Conservation Committee Chairman Rep. Scott Hutchinson, Sussman, and KPB Executive Director Julia Marano. Summit attendees also heard from KPB Co-chairman and Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Kathleen McGinty.



First, trash and litter along roadways catch Pennsylvanians' eyes, and they are bothered by it. Second, highway landscaping across the state also draws attention and it could be better. Nearly 90 percent noticed litter and trash along Pennsylvania roadways and more than 90 percent are bothered by it. Nearly three-quarters of those surveyed noticed landscaping along Pennsylvania highways as well.

The survey compared Pennsylvania to other states and found that the commonwealth is certainly no cleaner than other states and worse than some. Close to 60 percent stated that Pennsylvania either has more (23.1 percent) or about the same (36.8 percent) amount of litter as other states. Only 12.2 percent thought Pennsylvania had less litter.

A majority (more than 54 percent) felt the state's landscaping efforts are merely "average", despite the fact that a similar majority thought beautifying Pennsylvania's roadways would help to improve business and tourism.

The survey also spoke to possible ways to do a better job in preventing and cleaning up litter, and the results seemed to point to the importance of local efforts in conjunction with a combined approach including enforcement and education.

Given the importance Pennsylvanians place on roadside aesthetics and its perceived impact on economic growth, you would think we would want to do the best job we could. Pennsylvania does make such an effort on Earth Day, during the Great Pennsylvania Clean Up, and through such programs as Adopt-A-Highway, but it is apparent there is room for improvement and a more concerted and comprehensive campaign is needed.

The committee has shared the survey results with KPB and state agencies such as PennDOT and others to foster interest and support for a real roadside aesthetics program in Pennsylvania.

Please check out the complete results on pages 3 – 6. The committee is pleased to work with KPB and the appropriate state agencies to try to heighten the importance of roadside aesthetics and to seek ways to devote more resources to improving roadside aesthetics.

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