

BOX BUTTE COUNTY ROAD DEPARTMENT
762-6797

Recently the Box Butte County Road Department has received calls regarding the mowing of roadsides and ditches. Since a few people have questions it is fair to guess that more have the same questions but haven't come forward so we will try to address it here.

Earlier this year the Nebraska Legislature reviewed many policies and thoughts before and during their regular session, one bill that came out of session relating to highways and bridges was Legislative Bill 584. This bill revises Nebraska State Statute 39-1811 Weeds; mowing; duty of landowner; neglect of duty; obligation of county board; cost; assessment and collection. With this bill came date changes for mowing roadside vegetation most notable is LB 584 prohibits counties from mowing ditches prior to July1, however, it does not restrict landowners from mowing roadside vegetation on shoulders, intersections or entrances. The intent of the bill is to encourage the growth of habitat for upland birds, pollinators, song birds, help reduce soil erosion and create bioswale buffers helping reduce silt and pollution runoff water. The duties of the landowner have not changed; Section one of the same statute reads that *"It shall be the duty of the landowners in this state to mow all weeds that can be mowed with the ordinary farm mower to the middle of all public roads and drainage ditches running along their lands at least, twice each year, namely, sometime in July for the first time and sometime in September for the second time."*

Though most of the calls that have been placed are in regards to wildlife in the rights-of-way, there have been concerns of livestock being there as well, but the root of the call is a fear of striking the animal. In addition to other responsibilities, the Box Butte County Road Department has been mowing roadsides and ditches not only trying to curb the collisions but to prepare for winter and snow as well. Reducing the vegetation to eight inches or shorter does allow for more visibility of what may be in the rights-of-way but it will also help reduce snow accumulation on the roads.

Should you have any questions regarding this article, feel free to call the Box Butte County Road Department at 762-6797.