

HR-246 Engineering Study; Reducing Sign Vandalism

KEY WORDS: Vandalism, sign maintenance

ABSTRACT

Sign vandalism has traditionally been a vexing problem for Iowa counties. The extent of the cost and incidence of these acts have never been fully ascertained, but a 1990 survey indicated that they cost Iowa counties more than 1.5 million dollars annually. In 1990, the Iowa Legislature recognized the seriousness of the problem and strengthened the existing sign vandalism law by increasing the penalty for illegal possession of a traffic control device from a simple to a serious misdemeanor. However, the courts must be willing to prosecute vandals to the magnitude provided in the Iowa Code. An educational campaign begun in 1987 involving over 200 Iowa school districts to educate students on the seriousness of the problem evidently did not have the effect of dramatically reducing the overall cost of sign vandalism in Iowa. This study sought to define the scope of the problem and possibly offer some effective countermeasures to combat sign vandalism and theft in Iowa.