

Animal blood, entrails litter local roads

By BRIAN OLIVO
Collegian Staff Writer

Half-eaten deer carcasses, squashed squirrels and flattened fowl have proven to be obstacles for drivers and pedestrians traveling in and around State College.

Driving along Interstate 80 or U.S. Route 322, drivers are often forced to veer to the side of the road to avoid hitting dead animals. Roadkill is a problem in Centre County, especially on the more rural roads just outside of downtown State College.

But, there is a group of people who work to relieve the worries of drivers who navigate on these roadkill-infested streets.

"Crews are sent out on a daily basis to clean up the roadkill as quickly as possible," said Eugene Keys, district community relations coordinator at the Centre County Department of Transportation.

The Department of Transportation divides dead animals into two categories — deerkill and other animal roadkill, Keys said.

Deerkill, which is primarily located on the interstate highways, is monitored by the County Department of Transportation in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

When workers spot deer on the

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road, Keys said, the deer are dragged to the side of the road with meat hooks and left there.

If the roadway does not have an available plot of land where the carcass can be placed to decay naturally, the workers will pick up the deer and find another location where it can be properly disposed of, Keys said.

While the Department of Transportation tries to pick up deerkill as quickly as possible, some University students said the process takes too long.

Isaac Itenberg (freshman-international business) said the large amount of roadkill in the area is potentially harmful to drivers.

"Driving back and forth on Route 80 from my hometown in New York, I see a countless number of deer on the road," Itenberg said. "Not only is it an eyesore, but it can be dangerous for drivers as well."

For people who want to reduce

the amount of roadkill, Keys said they can assist the Department of Transportation by calling in and reporting the roadkill.

Crews will immediately be sent to the location and will speed up the entire cleanup process, she said.

Roadkill is not limited to the interstate highways outside of town. Many local residents said it is impossible to walk or drive down the street without having to dodge a squashed squirrel or a mutilated cat.

Jo Wilson, who works in State College, said she sees the problems of local roadkill on a daily basis.

"There's always a dead skunk on Park Avenue by the Agriculture Building. This area of campus has an abundance of roadkill that lies there for days," Wilson said.

Richard Waltz, supervisor of streets and sewers in State College, agreed that there is a plethora of roadkill in State College.

"Roadkill is a problem that exists right here on the local roads of the borough," he said. "At times, animals lie in the road until the citizens report the animals. This can often take days."

That is because State College roadkill pick up operates on a call-in system only, he said.

Once the animals are actually picked up by the sanitation crews, they are thrown in the back of a truck, which then transports them to a local transfer station, Waltz said.

His work on the sanitation crews has left Waltz with vivid memories of working with roadkill.

"I would be working at the dump, and trucks with the roadkill would come in, and we'd be responsible for burying the animals," he said.

From his years of experience, Waltz said the problem of roadkill can be less of a nuisance if the citizens of State College cooperate with the Department of Public Works.

"Many people in the area are unaware that roadkill is picked up on a call-in basis only," he said. "If you want to see a decrease in the number of dead animals on the pavement, it is up to you to call the animals in. I'll then send my crews right over."

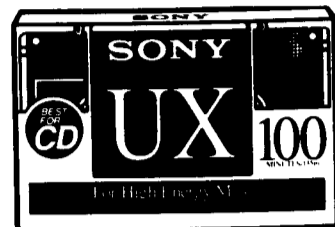
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