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KDOT assessing damage from grass fire

Efforts are under way by the Kansas Department of Transportation to identify persons whose property may have been damaged in a grass fire Monday afternoon in Graham County.

The fire started about 3 p.m. as a KDOT crew was sealing cracks on U.S. 24 about five miles east of Hill City. The fire burned an area about six miles long by three miles wide north of the highway and was extinguished by 2 a.m. today.

A farm house in eastern Graham County was 20 to 30 percent damaged by the fire. The resident of the home was able to leave the house and was uninjured. Also damaged or destroyed were hay bales, fence posts and utility poles. KDOT is attempting to identify and contact those whose property may have been damaged.

"We regret that our maintenance operation resulted in a fire," said Hays Area Engineer Kevin Zimmer. "KDOT will make every effort possible to contact those property owners affected by the fire and begin the efforts to assess and process any claims for damage from the fire."

The crack-sealing work the crew was performing involves filling cracks in the pavement surface to prevent freeze-thaw damage to the road. The preservation action involves first removing debris from the crack with a blower, heating the sides of the crack with a torch and then filling the crack.

Persons who think their property was damaged can contact KDOT's Office of Chief Counsel to make a claim by calling 785-296-3831, or by sending an e-mail to Oswald@ksdot.org.

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