



**\*\*PLEASE READ ALL CRITERIA BEFORE SUBMITTING APPLICATION\*\***

## **SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL MARKERS**

### **Program Overview and Criteria**

As the official state historical marker program since 1936, the South Carolina Historical Marker Program has established criteria for what places may and may not be marked, and for the process by which accurate and appropriate marker texts are approved by the South Carolina Department of Archives and History (SCDAH).

The coordinator of the South Carolina Historical Marker Program, on behalf of SCDAH, works with sponsoring organizations to research, draft, revise, and finalize texts for markers. The coordinator of the program has the responsibility to ensure that marker texts are both accurate and appropriate, and the Director of the Department of Archives and History has the final authority to approve texts for the official state historical marker program.

#### **THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE**

South Carolina Historical Markers mark and interpret historically significant **places** important to an understanding of South Carolina's past. Marker inscriptions may discuss any number of subjects, but those **subjects must have a meaningful, if not unique connection to the proposed marker location**. If such a connection cannot be established, then the location will not be eligible for a state marker focused on that subject.

Among the more typical places eligible for state historical markers are sites of important events, institutions, or activities, as well as locations closely associated with influential individuals or that are highly significant for their architectural design.

## SPONSORSHIP

- All markers must be sponsored by an **organization**. Individual people may not serve as marker sponsors. Groups that may sponsor markers include but are not limited to: historical, civic, or heritage organizations; local governments; religious congregations; and alumni associations. Though individuals may not sponsor markers, they may ask an organization to sponsor one on their behalf.
- After SCDAH approves a marker, the sponsor orders the marker directly from the manufacturer (Sewah Studios) and is responsible for paying all marker costs. SCDAH does not receive funding to pay for new state historical markers.
- Groups that serve as a marker's official sponsor assume responsibility for any future marker repair or replacement that may be necessary. SCDAH does not receive funding to pay for markers or assist with these tasks but can provide some general guidance on basic marker maintenance. Any damaged or missing markers should be reported to the program coordinator.
- If a sponsor does not own the property where a marker will be located, the sponsor may wish to secure a legal agreement with the property owner governing any future marker maintenance, repair, or replacement that may be needed. SCDAH does not require such agreements, nor is SCDAH able to offer any legal advice on whether such an agreement is warranted.
- Once a marker is approved, the sponsor is responsible for installing the marker and ensuring it complies with any applicable local or state regulations concerning the placement of historical markers, signs, etc. Markers located in a South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) right-of-way require additional permitting and may have to be installed using a breakaway post system. These must be purchased **separately** from the marker itself. **Marker manufacturer Sewah Studios does not sell breakaway systems**, but sponsors still must notify Sewah if their marker will require such a system.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Markers will only be approved for historic places that are at least 50 years old, associated with significant events that occurred at least 50 years ago, or associated with significant persons who became important at least 50 years ago **and** who are deceased.
- Places do not have to retain their historical appearance to be eligible for a state historical marker.
- Markers should be located as close to the historic place as possible while still remaining publicly visible. Markers may not be approved for installation points that are inaccessible to the public.
- Locations may be eligible for state historical markers based on national, state, or local significance.
- Markers will not recognize living persons, even persons of statewide or national significance, associated with historic places.

- Markers may be approved for historic properties or sites closely associated with deceased significant persons, but ONLY if:
  - a) the property is the single property or site in the state which best represents the individual's community of birth or residence, productive career, association with a particular institution, or association with a significant event, **AND**
  - b) no other site in South Carolina closely associated with the individual and significant primarily for that association has already been marked.
- Markers may be approved for cemeteries based on their significance to a particular community, significant persons buried there, their association with significant events, or their significance in gravestone art. Markers will not be approved for individual graves or plots within cemeteries and will not simply list individuals buried in the cemetery.
- Individual components of a historic property already marked as an entity may not be eligible for additional historical markers. Please consult the program coordinator before applying for such a marker.
- Properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places are not necessarily eligible for the state marker program (and vice versa). The National Register and the marker program are separate programs with their own distinct purposes, and sponsors should not assume that a Register-listed property is also a candidate for a state historical marker.
- Though markers interpret historic places, they are not an official historic preservation designation, such as is the case with the National Register of Historic Places or National Historic Landmark programs. Being approved for a marker places no restrictions on what may be done to a property.

## DESIGN OPTIONS

- South Carolina Historical Markers are available in two types: a vertical 24"x36" **City-Size marker**, and a horizontal 42"x32" **Country-Size marker**. The type of marker will be based on the immediate surroundings of the marker site.

All state historical markers must use the program's official design seen above, with raised black letters on a silver background. Sponsors **may not** order custom colors or incorporate imagery of any kind into the marker design. The marker manufacturer **will not** honor any requests to deviate from the official South Carolina Historical Marker design. If sponsors repaint or repair a marker, they are also expected to use the current black-on-silver paint scheme for all elements of the marker.

## INSCRIPTION GUIDELINES

- Marker inscriptions will conform to the program's in-house style for capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, grammar, and otherwise.
- Inscriptions must clearly relate how the marker subject is connected to the marker's location.

- Marker texts **will not memorialize** families or individuals associated with historic places. Markers may, however, interpret the lives and careers of significant persons associated with historic places, as evaluated in the context of local, state, or national history.
- Markers will not include lists of significant persons associated with historic places or institutions.
- Markers for schools, colleges, or universities will not discuss the later careers and achievements of alumni, or list the fields of endeavor in which they gained significance. Markers will focus on the school as an institution and will not list or discuss any persons who attended or graduated from it.
- Markers will not emphasize recent events in a site's history unless they are necessary to advance the basic story of a property's history, e.g. an historic building being demolished.

## **PREPARING YOUR APPLICATION**

Applications for South Carolina Historical Markers will be considered incomplete and ineligible for processing until all of the following are received:

1. **Completed S.C. Historical Marker Application Form** - Found at the end of this packet.
2. **1-2 paragraph summary of the marker subject's history** – This should provide a very simple overview of the marker site's history using plain, concrete language. The summary should focus on key details such as: important events (construction/demolition, opening/closing, etc.); historically significant functions; who used the property; and important changes over time. This is not a rough draft of the marker inscription, but it will be referred to when the program coordinator begins drafting the inscription.
3. **Copies of source materials used to prepare the summary – **\*\*Do not send original documents, only copies\*\***** - These materials will be reviewed by the program coordinator to verify the accuracy of the narrative summary. Dates, names, and other details specific to the history of the nominated property should be substantiated with **primary sources** created during or immediately following the events being documented. Examples commonly used for marker projects include deeds, plats, historical newspaper articles, correspondence, and organizational minutes. **Secondary sources** should be used for contextual information or to lend authority to a particular interpretation of primary sources; they should not be the sole basis for specific, factual details being included in the inscription.
4. **\$250 application fee, payable to SCDAH** – Supports work that SCDAH conducts on behalf of the program such as: reviewing application materials; conducting additional research; drafting and revising marker inscriptions; maintaining communication with sponsors; and fielding general public inquiries.

Application materials should be mailed in **hard copy** to: South Carolina Historical Marker Program, S.C. Department of Archives & History, 8301 Parklane Road, Columbia, SC 29223. For more information about the program requirements or application process, please contact the marker program coordinator, Edwin C. Breeden, Ph.D., at 803-896-6182 or [ebreeden@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:ebreeden@scdah.sc.gov).

# SCDOT HISTORICAL MARKER POLICIES

As soon as possible, applicants for South Carolina Historical Markers should contact their county's South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) Maintenance Engineer to determine if their proposed marker location is in a state right-of-way and, if so, what steps must be taken to comply with SCDOT regulations.

If your marker *is* located in a state right-of-way, **you will have to apply for an SCDOT encroachment permit** to erect the marker. Encroachment applications should not be submitted to SCDOT until after SCDAH has finalized the marker text and sent sponsors a formal approval letter.

SCDOT may also require that markers in the right-of-way **be installed using a breakaway post system**. Breakaway systems **must be purchased separately** from the standard marker and post. Such systems cost several hundred dollars and require professional, specialized installation. Markers being installed in urban or low-speed areas may not require a breakaway system. Sponsors should confirm any applicable requirements with their local SCDOT maintenance office **before** submitting their order to Sewah Studios.

If your marker will require a breakaway post system, you must notify marker manufacturer Sewah Studios **when you place your order** that your marker will require a breakaway system. **Sewah does not sell breakaway systems**, but they must know if one will be used so they can specially fabricate the marker to receive the correct type of post for the system. Sewah will provide a **round 4-inch OD (outside diameter) post** to fit the breakaway system, instead of the standard octagonal post. For more information on how to obtain a breakaway system, please contact Edwin Breeden, coordinator for the South Carolina Historical Marker Program.

Sponsors should also be aware that SCDOT does not accept delivery of markers, does not install markers, and does not maintain markers, even those that are placed in the right-of-way. Marker sponsors are responsible for all of these tasks.

If your marker *is not* located in a state right-of-way, then SCDOT does not require any of these additional steps. However, sponsors must also ensure their preferred marker location complies with any applicable local regulations, which vary across the state.

For additional information on SCDOT requirements, contact marker program coordinator Edwin Breeden at [ebreeden@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:ebreeden@scdah.sc.gov) or 803-896-6182.



# State Historic Preservation Office

South Carolina Department of Archives and History  
8301 Parklane Road | Columbia, SC | 29223  
scdah.sc.gov

## SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL MARKER APPLICATION

### PROPOSED MARKER TITLE

---

### PROPOSED LOCATION OF MARKER

Please provide an address or enclose a map showing the location

---

### SPONSORING ORGANIZATION

Write name as it should appear on the marker

---

### MARKER TYPE

CITY-SIZE MARKER, 24" x 36", 1" LETTERS (sites in incorporated cities and towns)

COUNTRY-SIZE MARKER, 42" x 32", 1.5" LETTERS (all other sites)

The coordinator of the South Carolina Historical Marker Program, on behalf of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History, works with sponsoring organizations to research, draft, revise, and approve texts for markers.

The coordinator of the program has the responsibility to ensure that marker texts are both accurate and appropriate, and the Director of the Department of Archives and History has the final authority to approve texts for the official state historical marker program.

### MARKER TEXTS

The Department of Archives and History recommends that prospective marker sponsors first contact the coordinator of the South Carolina Historical Marker Program to determine if the proposed marker location meets the state marker program criteria.

Marker applications should include a brief narrative paragraph or two describing the basic history of the place being marked. This description will **NOT** appear on the marker but is a guide for the coordinator in preparing the marker text. The most important component of a marker application is documentation of the history and significance of the marker subject and site. Sponsors should therefore furnish copies of relevant portions of major primary and secondary sources for the coordinator to review alongside the 1-2 paragraph narrative.

Contact the coordinator of the South Carolina Historical Marker Program for advice about submitting relevant documentation.

A draft text will be prepared by the coordinator and sent to sponsors for their review and comments. After any further revisions necessary, the final text will be approved and signed by the director of the South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

**MARKER APPLICATION SUBMITTED BY:**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
SPONSORING ORGANIZATION \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

---

**APPLICATION FEE**

Payable to South Carolina Department of Archives and History

**\$250.00**

If a proposed marker does not meet the criteria of the South Carolina Historical Marker Program, the application fee will be refunded.

---

**MARKER PRICES (Effective January 1, 2026, through December 31, 2026)**

City Size:	same text both sides with 7' post	<b>\$2,540.00</b>
	different text each side with 7' post	<b>\$2,805.00</b>
Country Size:	same text both sides with 7' post	<b>\$2,705.00</b>
	different text each side with 7' post	<b>\$2,930.00</b>

**Do not** send this payment to the Department of Archives and History.

After the final marker text is approved by the director, the applicant will send a **separate** check to:

Sewah Studios  
190 Millcreek Road  
Marietta, Ohio 45750  
(888) 557-3924  
(740) 373-2087

[info@sewahstudios.com](mailto:info@sewahstudios.com)

[www.sewahstudios.com](http://www.sewahstudios.com)

Breakaway post systems, which may be required if the marker will be installed in an SCDOT right-of-way, must be purchased separately. **Sewah Studios does not sell these systems**, but Sewah must be notified if such a system will be used.

---

**RETURN APPLICATION TO:**

Edwin C. Breeden, Ph.D.

South Carolina Historical Marker Program  
South Carolina Department of Archives and History

8301 Parklane Road  
Columbia, S.C. 29223  
(803) 896-6182

[ebreeden@scdah.sc.gov](mailto:ebreeden@scdah.sc.gov)

[scdah.sc.gov/historic-preservation/programs/historical-markers](http://scdah.sc.gov/historic-preservation/programs/historical-markers)