



****PLEASE READ ALL GUIDELINES BEFORE SUBMITTING APPLICATION****

SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL MARKERS

Program Criteria and Guidelines

South Carolina Historical Markers mark and interpret historically significant places important to an understanding of South Carolina's past, including locations of noteworthy events; buildings, sites, structures, or other resources significant for their design or as an example of a type; or places closely associated with institutions or individuals significant in local, state, or national history.

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.

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.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- All markers must be sponsored by an **organization**; individual people may not serve as a marker's sponsor. Groups that may sponsor markers include historical, patriotic, civic, or other organizations, as well as institutions such as church congregations or schools and colleges. Though individuals may not sponsor markers, they may propose and pay for them and request that an appropriate organization serve as sponsor on their behalf.

- 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 that will be located in a South Carolina Department of Transportation (SCDOT) right-of-way require additional permitting and must be installed using a breakaway post system that 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.
- Sponsors are responsible for any future marker repair or replacement that may be necessary. SCDAH does not receive funding to 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.
- Sites should be marked as close to the historic place as possible, on the nearest public street, county road, or state highway.
- 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.

ELIGIBLE SUBJECTS

- 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 died at least 50 years ago.
- Markers may be approved for buildings or structures that are either significantly altered or no longer standing.
- 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 additional markers.

INSCRIPTION GUIDELINES

- Marker inscriptions will conform to the program's in-house style guide for capitalization, punctuation, abbreviation, grammar, and otherwise.
- 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

All applications for new South Carolina Historical Markers **must** include the following:

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. While useful, National Register of Historic Places nominations are secondary, not primary sources, and they alone are generally insufficient documentation for marker projects.

4. **\$250 application fee, payable to SCDAH** – These funds support the various types of work that SCDAH conducts on behalf of the program, including but not limited to: reviewing application materials; conducting additional research; drafting and revising marker inscriptions; maintaining communication with marker sponsors; and fielding public inquiries related to the program.

Applications will be considered incomplete and ineligible for processing until the coordinator receives all of these materials.

Applications 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 guidelines or application process, please contact the marker program coordinator, Edwin C. Breeden, Ph.D., at 803-896-6182 or 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.

If your marker is located in a state right-of-way, you will have to take the following additional steps:

- Purchase a **breakaway post system** to ensure the marker meets SCDOT highway safety guidelines. These systems cost several hundred dollars and require professional, specialized installation. Breakaway systems must be purchased separately from the standard marker and post. For more information on how to obtain a breakaway system, please contact Edwin Breeden, coordinator for the South Carolina Historical Marker Program.
- 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.
- 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.

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 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 – Include a city or county map with location clearly marked
Please review attached SCDOT policies on marker locations

SPONSORING ORGANIZATION – write name as it should appear on 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 contact the coordinator of the South Carolina Historical Marker Program to determine if the place being proposed for a historical marker meets the criteria of the official state historical marker program.

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 May 1, 2023, through April 30, 2024)

City Size:	same text both sides with 7' post	\$2,380.00
	different text each side with 7' post	\$2,630.00
Country Size:	same text both sides with 7' post	\$2,540.00
	different text each side with 7' post	\$2,750.00

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
www.sewahstudios.com

Breakaway post systems, which are 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
scdah.sc.gov/historic-preservation/programs/historical-markers