



**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORIC RESOURCES**

**2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23221**

Telephone: (804) 367-2323 Fax: (804) 367-2391

**Application to Propose Placement of a New  
Virginia Historical Highway Marker**

Before completing this application, please read the information below explaining the procedures and criteria for the marker program. Please note that not all applications will be approved.

You may submit this application and accompanying material via email to Jennifer Loux, Highway Marker Program Manager, at [Jennifer.Loux@dhr.virginia.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Loux@dhr.virginia.gov). If you would prefer to submit a hard copy of your application, please send it to:

Dr. Jennifer R. Loux  
Department of Historic Resources  
2801 Kensington Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23221

Incomplete applications will not be considered. Applications *must* be accompanied by photocopies of source material (or links to online material). All submitted materials become the property of the Department of Historic Resources (DHR).

If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Loux at (804) 482-6089 or [Jennifer.Loux@dhr.virginia.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Loux@dhr.virginia.gov).

**Purpose of the Marker Program**

The Virginia historical highway marker program documents facts, persons, events, and places prominently identified with the history of the nation, state, or region. The Department of Historic Resources' purpose in erecting markers is to educate the public about Virginia's history, not to honor, memorialize, or commemorate persons, events, or places. Because highway markers are not honorific in nature, they do not serve the same purpose as monuments, statues, memorial plaques, or war memorials.

## Application Procedures

The Virginia Board of Historic Resources (BHR), the body responsible for approving highway markers, convenes in March, June, September, and December. The Highway Marker Program will accept applications from the public four times per year, in advance of each quarterly meeting.

Using the criteria outlined below, Marker Program staff will select the **five** highest-scoring marker proposals from the pool received at each deadline. Staff will then present this list of selected topics to the BHR for approval at its next meeting, approximately seven weeks after the application deadline. At the subsequent meeting of the BHR, three months later, staff will present the final texts of those five markers for official Board approval.

Any applicant whose project is not one of the five selected will be eligible to apply again in the future, but applications will not automatically be carried over to future board cycles.

The four deadlines for submitting applications are as follows:

**February 1:** The BHR will approve the selection of five markers from this pool of applicants at its March meeting; the BHR will consider the texts of these markers at its June meeting.

**May 1:** The BHR will approve the selection of five markers from this pool of applicants at its June meeting; the BHR will consider the texts of these markers at its September meeting.

**August 1:** The BHR will approve the selection of five markers from this pool of applicants at its September meeting; the BHR will consider the texts of these markers at its December meeting.

**October 20:** The BHR will approve the selection of five markers from this pool of applicants at its December meeting; the BHR will consider the texts of these markers at its March meeting.

### **Proposed marker topics will be evaluated based on the following criteria:**

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| 25 points | Has potential to educate the public   |
| 25 points | Fills a gap in the historical marker program in order to address a topic that the program has not extensively covered                       |
| 20 points | Addresses the history of a community that has been marginalized or underrepresented   |
| 20 points | Reflects a breadth of historical significance that extends beyond the locality, preferably demonstrating statewide or national significance |
| 10 points | Contributes to a more equitable geographic distribution of markers  |

***When developing a marker proposal, please keep in mind:***

- State historical markers are not erected to *honor* or *celebrate* people, places, or events. If you are primarily seeking to honor someone or something, a state marker is not the proper venue.
- Our mission is to educate the public, and markers are intended to present historically accurate information in as objective a fashion as possible. Therefore, texts will not editorialize or assign value judgments. Additionally, we cannot leave out factual information that is important, even if it may be considered upsetting or unpleasant.
- Topics must demonstrate a regional, statewide, or national level of significance. Subjects of primarily local importance are not eligible for state highway markers. State markers will emphasize their topics' connections with broader trends in history.
- Please consider whether there is anyone with whom you should consult or partner when preparing your application. For example, if you are applying for a marker about an individual who has living children or grandchildren, have you invited them to be part of the project? If you are applying for a marker about a school you did not attend, have you contacted the alumni association?
- Marker proposals will not advance to the Board of Historic Resources when it is impossible to authenticate or verify the information to the satisfaction of DHR staff. Photocopies of the documents that support your proposed marker text are a crucial part of the application package. We need to see *how you know* what you know about your topic.
- Buildings, historic districts, archaeological sites, cemeteries, etc., listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or the National Register of Historic Places do not automatically qualify for highway markers. Each application will be evaluated on its own merits.
- A house of worship may qualify for a state historical marker if it: (1) was founded in the colonial period, (2) was founded by African Americans in the Emancipation/Reconstruction era, (3) was the first of a denomination in a locality, or (4) presents significant architectural qualities. Most other houses of worship would more appropriately be noted on a local marker.
- Please submit your application with the understanding that DHR staff will edit your proposed marker text in consultation with you.
- If the application is approved, the applicant will be charged for the manufacture of the sign panel and, in some cases, the post on which the sign is mounted. The price is set by Sewah Studios, the marker manufacturer, and is approximately \$3,000. For localities outside VDOT's jurisdiction, there is a \$400 charge for the post on which the marker is installed.
- We want you to succeed! We strive to tell Virginia's story, and we appreciate your role in telling it. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Jennifer Loux at [Jennifer.Loux@dhr.virginia.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Loux@dhr.virginia.gov) or 804-482-6089. We look forward to working with you.

*Here, for your reference, are criteria established by the BHR for the Marker Program:*

## **Marker Criteria**

(Approved by the Board of Historic Resources, 8 December 1993; revised 17 March 2016 and 13 December 2018)

The state historical highway marker program documents facts, persons, events, and places prominently identified with the history of the nation, state, or region. The text for each proposed marker shall be reviewed and edited by the manager of the marker program and the staff of the Department of Historic Resources and, with the location, shall be approved by the Board of Historic Resources.

No marker shall be erected to commemorate a living person.

In order for an historic event to be eligible for a marker, the event must have occurred at least fifty years ago. Likewise, a place or person must have attained its significance at least fifty years ago, although there are exceptions if the event, place, or person is of extraordinary historical significance.

The size and shape of the state marker shall be that presently in use. Only the following shall appear on the marker: the seal of Virginia; identification code; title; text; name of the Department of Historic Resources; and the year the marker was approved.

Markers shall be erected in safe locations, at or close to the places being described, and where they will be visible to the public. When a marker is to be placed in a Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) right-of-way, VDOT shall approve the site and install and maintain the marker. When a marker is to be placed in a locality's right-of-way, the local public works department shall approve the site and install and maintain the marker.

# How to Develop and Submit a Marker Application

## **1. Research and Write a Proposed Marker Text**

Research the topic by consulting primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are materials produced at the time of the historical event in question (such as letters, school board minutes, or newspaper articles), while secondary sources include articles or books written later. DHR places a higher value on primary sources. It is often helpful to seek assistance from local and regional historical associations and libraries when conducting your research. **You must photocopy your sources and submit them to DHR with your application.**

Propose a draft marker text of about 100-120 words, following the “Highway Marker Writing Style” (see Appendix 1 near the end of this packet). The text must demonstrate that the topic rises above the local level of significance.

Unless there is sufficient documentary evidence to establish authenticity without question, no “firsts” or other superlative terms will be used. As markers are designed to last for decades, please also avoid making observations in the text about current conditions of buildings or land.

## **2. Suggest a Suitable Marker Location**

The site you suggest should be in the public right-of-way. Please provide either a street address or a description such as “U.S. Rte. 11, 0.2 miles south of Virginia Rte. 270.” Mark the location on a street or highway map and submit it with the application.

If the marker text refers to a specific physical property, we ask that you provide the property owner's contact information and signature on page 12 of this application.

Please see step 6 below for more information about the site-selection process.

*BE SURE TO NOTE:* If your proposed site lies within the corporate limits of an independent city or town, or on a secondary road in Arlington County or Henrico County, see Appendix 2 at the end of this packet. You will need to obtain a letter indicating the locality’s willingness to install and maintain the marker, and submit that letter to us with your marker application. For all other counties and localities, VDOT is responsible for approving sites and erecting markers; you do not need to obtain a letter indicating pre-approval from VDOT.

## **3. Submit Your Application Packet to DHR for Review**

Approximately seven weeks after the application deadline for the quarter in which you apply, DHR staff will inform you whether your proposed marker topic has been selected as one of the five that will move forward in the process. If your application was not selected, you may apply again in the future.

#### **4. Work with DHR in Revising or Refining the Marker Text**

If your application is selected as one of the five that will move forward toward official approval, DHR staff will work with you to finalize the text that will appear on the marker. Staff will conduct additional research if necessary and will edit the text for accuracy, clarity, brevity, thoroughness, and educational value. Staff will then send the text to the Marker Editorial Committee, a group of outside scholars. If the committee accepts the text, DHR staff will present it to the Board of Historic Resources for official approval.

#### **5. Await the Final Decision of the Board of Historic Resources**

DHR will notify the applicant of the date and time of the quarterly board meeting at which the marker text will be presented. The meeting is open to the public, and thus applicants may attend. After the meeting, DHR will send the applicant a copy of the board-approved text. The board has final authority regarding the topics and content of all state markers.

#### **6. Meet with the Virginia Department of Transportation or Local Public Works Department**

If a board-approved marker is to be placed in VDOT's right-of-way, DHR will notify VDOT and ask that a traffic engineer meet with the sponsor to review the proposed site. VDOT is responsible for approving the site and may select another location if it concludes that the sponsor's choice is incompatible with traffic safety.

If a board-approved marker is to be placed outside VDOT's jurisdiction (that is, within the boundaries of an independent town or city, or on a secondary road in Arlington or Henrico County), DHR and the sponsor will work with the locality's public works department to secure site approval for the marker. For a list of towns and cities that maintain their own roadways, please see Appendix 2 to this application.

#### **Criteria for Marker Placement:**

##### **Safety**

It is expected that travelers will need to pull off the road to read the marker, and then reenter the highway; they must be able to do so conveniently and safely. Markers must be placed so that they do not block drivers' lines of sight when making turns or create traffic hazards when travelers stop to read the marker.

Markers also must be placed where they are least likely to be struck by motor vehicles or otherwise endanger motorists. Curves, industrial or commercial intersections, congested areas, and similar hazardous places will be avoided.

##### **Accessibility**

Ideally, the marker should be placed as close as possible to the site it describes. Sometimes, however, because of traffic conditions, the remoteness of the site, or other reasons, the marker must be placed some distance away. The marker should be placed in

a safe but relatively high-traffic area. Given the choice between a secondary road and a primary road, the marker will be placed on a primary road if both locations are equally safe. Markers are not permitted on interstate or other limited access highways, except in safety rest areas or at welcome centers.

### **Cost efficiency**

It is more cost effective to place the marker at an existing turnout or wide shoulder than it is to construct a new one. VDOT will not construct a pull-off area to accommodate a new marker. In some cases, this consideration may result in a marker's placement at a site other than the one requested by the sponsor.

### **Placement on private property**

State markers are usually placed in VDOT rights-of-way or on public property in independent localities. Under special circumstances they may be placed in an easement on private property.

## **7. Pay for the Manufacture of the Marker**

DHR will order the marker from the foundry, Sewah Studios, after the site has been approved. The foundry will bill the sponsoring organization directly at the time the marker is shipped to VDOT or to the local public works department. The price is set by Sewah Studios, the marker manufacturer, and is approximately \$3,000. Some applicants for markers in independent localities may be required to pay an additional \$400 for the post on which the marker will be mounted. The foundry accepts checks or money orders in payment.

VDOT will cover the cost of installing a marker in its right of way, including the cost of the post. In rare cases, funding for installation may not be immediately available, and the project may be delayed.

In certain localities outside VDOT's right of way, the sponsor may be responsible for covering the expenses associated with installing a marker.

The marker is the property of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The name of the sponsoring individual or organization cannot be included on the marker. The marker is silver-painted cast aluminum with black uppercase and lowercase letters and is approximately 42 by 40 inches. The same text appears on each side of the marker.

## **8. Hold an Unveiling Ceremony**

The schedule for ordering and manufacturing markers is determined by various factors including the workload of DHR, VDOT, local public works departments, and Sewah Studios. **The sponsor should not set a date for a ceremony** until the marker is delivered. DHR will try to send a representative to the ceremony to extend congratulations and to make brief remarks about the marker program. DHR, in consultation with the sponsor, will send out a press release to local media announcing the marker ceremony.

**Virginia Department of Historic Resources  
Historical Highway Marker Required Information**

This form is designed to provide the Virginia Department of Historic Resources with the data necessary to evaluate a potential marker topic.

<b>Proposed Title for Marker:</b>
<b>Address or Description of Proposed Marker Site:</b>  Please also attach a <b>map</b> showing the proposed location for the marker.
<b>City or County where proposed marker would be located:</b> If the marker is to be placed in a town or city, please see Appendix 2 to this application form.
<b>Would the marker be placed at the actual historic site it describes? If not, why not?</b> If the marker site and the historic site are different, please be sure to indicate each one on the map submitted as part of the application package.
<b>How far away (e.g., yards, miles) is the historic site from the proposed marker site (if applicable)?</b>
<b>Is the proposed marker associated with a “mitigation” agreement stemming from a federal 106 environmental review project?</b> If so, please provide details about who is involved with the project and the appropriate project codes.

**Proposed Text for the Marker:** What information do you think should appear on the marker? Please propose a draft text of about 100-120 words that highlights the most significant facets of the topic.

If your proposed topic is selected as one of the five that will move forward in the process toward official approval, please note that changes to the submitted text are likely to be made by DHR staff, the Marker Editorial Committee, and/or members of the Board of Historic Resources so that the final text conforms to the marker program's criteria and writing style. Examples of recently approved texts are available from DHR upon request.

In addition to submitting your proposed text in this application packet, **please also send an email containing your text** to Jennifer Loux at [Jennifer.Loux@dhr.virginia.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Loux@dhr.virginia.gov). This facilitates the creation of an electronic file for the application. Please do not write your text in capital letters.

**Proposed Marker Text:**

**Bibliographical Sources Consulted.** A minimum of three sources is required, but please do not limit yourself to three if you have additional material that will help us learn more about your subject. Our approval process includes a word-by-word fact check, and we will be looking at the documents very carefully. Please photocopy and submit all sources, or provide web addresses for sources that are online; applications submitted without these photocopies or web links will not be considered. Below, please list all documents, books, and articles you have consulted. You may use an extra sheet if necessary.

**Source #1**

Author \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Publisher \_\_\_\_\_  
Publisher's location  
[City and State] \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of publication \_\_\_\_\_

**Source #2**

Author \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Publisher \_\_\_\_\_  
Publisher's location  
[City and State] \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of publication \_\_\_\_\_

**Source #3**

Author \_\_\_\_\_  
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Publisher \_\_\_\_\_  
Publisher's location  
[City and State] \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of publication \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsor Information** (The foundry will send the invoice for the marker to the address provided below.)

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime telephone  
and area code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

By signing this agreement you confirm that you have funding to pay for a state historical highway marker. The price is set by Sewah Studios and is approximately \$3,000 for the sign panel. The post on which the marker would be installed—which is necessary only for markers installed in localities outside VDOT’s jurisdiction—is \$400. In certain situations the sponsor could be responsible for expenses associated with installing a marker. The marker is and will remain the property of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

**• • Signature required for processing all applications. • •**

If the applicant is an organization, please provide the name and title of the contact person who will work with DHR to finalize the marker text.

Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime telephone  
and area code: \_\_\_\_\_

**Author's Information**

(If the author of the proposed marker text is different from the sponsor, please provide that person's contact information here.)

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime telephone  
and area code: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:** If the marker text refers to a specific physical property, the Department of Historic Resources needs the property owner's information and signature prior to reviewing the proposal. Please provide the same below:

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Firm: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime telephone  
and area code: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Notification**

In the following space, please provide the contact information for the local County Administrator or City Manager.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position/Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Locality: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime telephone  
and area code: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 1

### **Highway Marker Writing Style**

To ensure stylistic consistency among state markers, DHR staff will revise and edit draft texts. The goal is to provide as much accurate and interesting information as possible in a limited space. Sponsors can assist us by following these suggestions when writing their drafts.

- Aim for about 100-120 words, but it is better to be a little too long rather than too short in the first draft. Please be aware that a marker's final text must not exceed 700 characters (this includes letters, punctuation marks, and spaces).
- Spell out numbers less than 10; otherwise, use Arabic numerals (one, two, etc., but 10, 237, 10,000, etc.).
- Do not use honorary titles such as Mr. and Mrs., but do use and abbreviate occupational titles and ranks (the Rev., Col., Maj. Gen., Dr., etc.).
- Use military style for dates; abbreviate months (7 Dec. 1941).
- Do not use commas before or after Jr., Sr., II, etc. (e.g. James Brown Jr. was secretary of the board).
- On Civil War subjects, write "Civil War," not "War Between the States." For military personnel, give the individual's rank at the time of the event being discussed on the marker.
- On Seven Years' War subjects, write "Seven Years' War," not "French and Indian War."
- On first use, give a person's full name as he or she used it or as it is best known (e.g. Alexander Graham Bell; Maggie L. Walker), but on subsequent use give only the last name.

For advice on writing concisely and vigorously, refer to *The Elements of Style* by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White. DHR uses the 17th edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* as its authority on copy style.

## Appendix 2

If you are applying for a marker to be placed in one of the following localities, your application *must* be accompanied by a signed letter from the local government stating that the locality agrees to install and maintain the marker on its public land.

If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Loux at [Jennifer.Loux@dhr.virginia.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Loux@dhr.virginia.gov).

### Towns

Abingdon	Chincoteague	Leesburg	Smithfield
Altavista	Christiansburg	Luray	South Boston
Ashland	Clifton Forge	Marion	South Hill
Bedford	Culpeper	Narrows	Strasburg
Berryville	Dumfries	Orange	Tazewell
Big Stone Gap	Elkton	Pearisburg	Vienna
Blacksburg	Farmville	Pulaski	Vinton
Blackstone	Front Royal	Purcellville	Warrenton
Bluefield	Grottoes	Richlands	Wise
Bridgewater	Herndon	Rocky Mount	Woodstock
Chase City	Lebanon	Saltville	Wytheville

### Counties

Arlington Co. and Henrico Co. (secondary roads only; call 804-482-6089 for further details)

### Cities

Alexandria	Fairfax	Manassas	Roanoke
Bristol	Falls Church	Manassas Park	Salem
Buena Vista	Franklin	Martinsville	Staunton
Charlottesville	Fredericksburg	Newport News	Waynesboro
Chesapeake	Galax	Norfolk***	Williamsburg
Colonial Heights	Hampton	Norton	Winchester
Covington	Harrisonburg	Poquoson	
Danville	Hopewell	Portsmouth	
Emporia	Lexington	Radford	

For markers in Lynchburg, Petersburg, Richmond (city), Suffolk, or Virginia Beach, you do not need to submit a letter from the local government. DHR has an agreement for marker installation with these localities.

\*\*\*To apply for a marker in Norfolk, you must receive special pre-approval from the City. You may contact them at [historicalmarker@norfolk.gov](mailto:historicalmarker@norfolk.gov) to begin this process.

*IS YOUR APPLICATION COMPLETE? Please make sure you...*

- Review Appendix 2 to determine whether your application needs to be accompanied by a signed letter from a local official.
- Include copies of your documents/sources that verify the information that would appear on the marker.
- Submit a map indicating the proposed location of the marker.
- Provide the sponsor's signature on page 11.
- Send in your proposed marker text in the body of an email (or in an attached Word document—not pdf) to [Jennifer.Loux@dhr.virginia.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Loux@dhr.virginia.gov).