

GUIDELINES FOR THE OFFICIAL WEST VIRGINIA HIGHWAY HISTORICAL MARKERS

Who may apply for a marker: A group or organization such as a historical society, a family association, patriotic or civic group, landmark commission, church or school group, county commission or agency may apply. An individual may not submit an application but may work through a group to sponsor a marker. Such sponsorship must be identified by the group in its application.

How to apply: Submit completed application, which includes all documentation necessary to support all statements made in the application. This documentation is critical in the subsequent evaluation process. Sufficient documented information must be provided so that the reviewers can clearly understand the significance of the subject that is being proposed and what resources are available to support the claim of significance. The application and submitted text will be reviewed and researched, and may be edited by Archives and History staff, who will decide what evidence is acceptable and sufficient for the determination of approval for each marker.

Where to submit the application: The application and its documentation and support are to be submitted to:

Aaron Parsons
Archives and History
The Culture Center
1900 Kanawha Blvd., E – Bldg. 9
Charleston, WV 25305-0300

The process: All completed applications are reviewed by Archives and History staff. Recommendations will be made to the Curator of the Department of Arts, Culture and History, who has final approval. If the application is approved, the actual production of the marker and its subsequent installation may take from six to nine months. Only markers approved in this manner may carry the State seal. The sponsoring group is responsible for continuing marker maintenance in accordance with marker program guidelines.

The criteria: the West Virginia Highway Historical Marker (WVHHM) program has the goal of commemorating places, events, or persons prominently identified with the history or prehistory of the nation, state or region and possessing some degree of unique significance in West Virginia in terms of history, architecture, or cultural life. A natural site must possess unusual qualities. The marker program cannot mark all historic places in West Virginia; not only would this be an impossible task, such a proliferation of historical markers could create obstructions to the flow of traffic and diminish the distinction of those markers designating significant sites.

CRITERIA

Specifically, a site to be marked by a WVHBM must possess one or more of the following:

- A. The primary event or contribution of significance being recognized must have occurred twenty-five years or more before the date of application.

- B. Be the birthplace, grave site, homestead, or the site of the original location associated with an individual or individuals who are no longer living and who played a uniquely significant role in national, state or local history. Significance implies contributions or leadership of an outstanding nature: individuals who, for example, served in the military or in Congress must have served with distinctions in some other capacity that is not purely of local note or importance. Requests to single out individuals to be recognized with a marker when many people have shared equally in an event of historical importance will not be approved.

- C. Be the known site of occupation, structures or formations of obvious significance to the prehistoric people of the state. No marker shall identify the precise location of or be within two miles of such site, if identifying the site would endanger the site's preservation and integrity.

- D. Be a natural site possessing unique or unusual geological, scenic or historical qualities for this area or region.

- E. Be a building or collection of buildings that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, or be the former or re-located site of such a building or collection of buildings.

- F. Be associated with events that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of national, state or local history, but such must have occurred twenty-five years or more before date of application.