

Instructions for Preparing a North Dakota Historical Marker Application Form, Review Process of Applications, and Fabrication and Installation State Historical Society of North Dakota

In 2005, the Fifty-ninth Legislative Assembly of North Dakota authorized the State Historical Society of North Dakota to develop and administer a historical Marker program. This was done by amending NDCC 55-10-12.

Legislative Authority
North Dakota Century Code 55-10-12, as amended. State Historical Marker Program. The State historical society may develop and administer a historical marker program for the purpose of identifying local, state and national points of interest in this state. The society shall authorize official markers to mark recognized sites and shall maintain an official historical markers sites listing. All costs, including production, installation, and maintenance of a historical marker are the responsibility of the applicant or sponsor of the marker.

The idea to produce a historical marker starts on the local level. The required sponsor is the person or group of people who believe that creating this historical marker is important and will provide the necessary resources for its creation and long-term maintenance. There are several responsibilities that go along with the sponsorship. These include:

- 1) Proposing a Historical Marker
- 2) Completing a Historical Marker Application Form.
- 3) Providing a suitable and approved location where the historical marker will be placed.
- 4) Funding the fabrication and installation of the historical marker.
- 5) Long-term maintenance of the historical marker. The sponsor must agree in writing to monitor and maintain the marker by cleaning and/or retouching paint as necessary. If vandalized the marker must be replaced or removed.

Criteria for establishing a North Dakota Historical Marker

1. *People of state or national significance.* To qualify as a subject for a historical marker, a person has to have made a significant impact in the history of North Dakota or the United States of America. In addition, the person in question has to have been deceased for at least 25 years.
2. *Places of state or national significance.* A place of state or national significance could be an archaeological site, building or other structure, geographical feature, geological feature, natural feature, or other site. For a building or other structure to qualify as a subject for a historical marker it must be at least 50 years old and must retain enough of its physical appearance and integrity to show its major qualities as described in the marker text.

3. *Events of state or national significance.* To qualify for a historic marker, the event in question must have occurred at least 25 years ago and must be verifiable as significant in the history of North Dakota or the United States of America.

Historical Marker subjects for which there are already existing markers will be given lower priority than those for which there are not. Compelling reasons must be given as to why a particular topic warrants more than one marker and the additional panel must not duplicate existing markers.

Historical markers may not be used to identify the location of burials or grave sites.

The text of the historical marker must be in a writing style that is both objective and dispassionate. It is the responsibility of the sponsor to show adequate documentation that supports the draft text. People, places, or events that are already presented on existing monuments or markers will receive less consideration than those that are not.

Markers shall be erected in safe locations close to the places being commemorated and where they will be visible to the traveling public.

Review Process for Historical Markers

1. Proposal for a Historical Marker is submitted to the Historical Marker Program Coordinator. The Historical Marker Program Coordinator will review the suggested marker topics submitted using the following criteria:
 - a. historical significance
 - b. availability of primary source documentation,
 - c. compliance with State Historical Society of North Dakota Historical Marker Program Guidelines and Procedures

The Historical Marker Program Coordinator will notify each applicant whether or not the topic proposed was approved to proceed to the Application stage of the process.

2. Applications are submitted to the Historical Marker Program Coordinator. The applications are processed in the order that they are received. The content and editorial review process should be anticipated to take two to three months if revisions are required.
3. The Historical Marker Program Coordinator assigns each Historical Marker Application to a Content Specialist that has expertise in the topic of the historical marker. The entire process from start to installation may take six months or more.
4. The Content Specialist reviews the topic, title, and text of the proposed historical marker and returns the application to the Historical Marker Program Coordinator with one of the following recommendations:

- a. The topic of the proposed historic marker meets the criteria and that the proposed title and text are acceptable. The proposed historical marker text is forwarded for editorial review.
 - b. The topic of the proposed historical marker meets the criteria, but there are problems with the title and/or text. Revisions need to be made prior to forwarding for editorial review. Suggested revisions are provided by the content specialist. The Historical Marker Program Coordinator notifies the Sponsor and suggests revisions. The sponsor is shown any revisions and asked if they wish to proceed with the project.
 - c. The topic of the proposed historical marker does not meet the criteria and does not merit status as a State Historical Marker. Reasons for this recommendation are provided by the content specialist. The Historical Marker Program Coordinator notifies the Sponsor of the decision along with an explanation.
5. The Historical Marker Program Coordinator submits the approved text for editorial review to the Editor or Assistant Editor of the State Historical Society of North Dakota.
6. The Historical Marker Program Coordinator reviews the location of the proposed historical marker to determine if there will be any adverse impact. If there is an adverse impact, the Historical Marker Program Coordinator will work with the Sponsor to find an alternate location that is suitable. Preferred locations would be on public property or on property that is used by a public nonprofit organization. In addition, a preferred location for a historical marker is the actual place of the event or topic. Historical markers that are placed on archaeological sites may require a mounting that does not disturb the ground.
7. Final approval is through the Marker Review Committee as scheduled by the Historical Marker Program Coordinator. The application and recommendations of the Content Specialist, editor, and Coordinator are reviewed by this committee.
8. Once content and location is approved by the SHSND, a letter of approval will be sent to the sponsor and to the vendor who will be fabricating the marker. The vendor will use this letter as the approved text when fabricating the marker, if any changes are to be made after approval, they must be submitted to the Marker Program Coordinator who will then contact the vendor with the updated text. It is the responsibility of the sponsor to provide payment to the vendor directly. Once the sponsor has submitted payment to the vendor, fabrication may begin with the following specifications:
 - a. Historical markers will be made from materials that can withstand decades of exposure to North Dakota's climate. Acceptable materials include cast aluminum, bronze, or similar enduring metals. Other materials may be acceptable with prior approval of the State Historical Society of North Dakota.
 - b. Black background with text in silver – lettering 5/8" to 1" in height. The heading is 2" in height. One-sided or two-sided markers with same copy or different copy

are acceptable. Silver colored border. A metal photo may be included if size and amount of text will allow. Manufacturer can provide details on included photos.

- c. Marker style is to be the “modified Georgia” style marker.
- d. The state designated insignia of a Western Meadowlark will appear in the half circle at the top of the sign. (Official design will be provided by the State Historical Society of North Dakota).
- e. Two sizes are acceptable:
 1. Cast aluminum or bronze with text area 30” high by 42” wide of approximately 100 to 150 words. Total plate size approximately 38” x 42” on a free-standing aluminum post.
 2. Cast aluminum or bronze with text area 42” x 54” of approximately 200 to 250 words on two post styles. Total plate size approximately 50”x 54”.
- f. The preferred vendor for these markers is:

Sewah Studios Inc.
Millcreek Road - PO Box 298 Marietta, OH 45750
Phone: (740)373-2087 | Fax: (740)373-3733 TOLL FREE: (888) 557-3924
<http://www.sewahstudios.com>

Other vendors may be acceptable with prior approval of the State Historical Society of North Dakota.
- g. The sponsor for the historical marker is responsible for its long-term maintenance. Therefore, the design of the marker should be made with techniques that require minimal maintenance and upkeep. They should be of a design that reflects quality even with changing tastes and fashions.
- h. All state historical markers will contain the following wording, placed as the final sentence in the marker’s text. “This marker has been placed in the North Dakota Historical Marker Register in XXXX (year installed).” **The name of the sponsoring organization appears at the bottom of the marker.**
- i. The marker number appears in the lower left corner of the marker.

Example of Sign Design

