

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

OFFICIAL TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER POLICIES

Adopted by the Texas Historical Commission January 27, 2012

Official Texas Historical Markers are those markers and plaques the Texas Historical Commission (THC) awards, approves or administers. They include Centennial markers the State of Texas awarded in the 1930s; Civil War Centennial markers from the 1960s; and medallions and markers awarded by the THC's predecessor, the Texas State Historical Survey Committee.

1. **THC authority over historical markers:** Official Texas Historical Markers are the property of the State of Texas. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) is the final determinant of all matters related to design, eligibility, content, manufacturing, placement or replacement, and compliance oversight. The markers may, at the sole discretion of the THC, be recalled for any reason it so determines, including inaccuracies or non-compliance with rules and policies. THC authority over historical markers in Texas is further described in Texas Government Code, Section 442.006.
2. **Marker sponsor:** The sponsor of an Official Texas Historical Marker is the individual or group that pays for a portion of the marker process in partnership with the THC. In general, the THC funds the costs associated with statewide program development and oversight, product design and inscriptions, quality review and all procedural matters. Sponsors, in turn, help defray the cost of manufacturing through their associated fees.
3. **Role of the County Historical Commission (CHC):** The CHC is the sole liaison to the THC for all matters related to the marker application process. The appropriate contact person is either the chair or marker chair, but the latter must be duly appointed by the CHC chair and authorized to act in that capacity for purposes of marker applications. It is the duty of the CHC chair to properly notify the THC History Programs Division of the marker chair's name and contact information.
4. **Marker disputes:** In the event the placement or content of an Official Texas Historical Marker is contested, the THC, after consultation with interested parties, has the sole authority to make the final decision related to retention, replacement or removal.
5. **Pre-application review:** If there are any questions about the potential eligibility of proposed marker topics, including structures, the CHC may provide basic information online to the THC staff for the purpose of a pre-application review of eligibility. Such reviews are only for the purpose of topic eligibility, and they do not replace the full review required of the regular application process. The informal inquiries can be made at any time of the year, although ample time should be given the staff if a decision is needed prior to the application deadline.
6. **Marker inscriptions:** The wording of the state marker inscriptions is the sole responsibility of the THC. Suggested inscriptions will not be accepted as part of the application, nor can they be incorporated as part of the text preparation.
7. **Local dedication deadlines:** The THC marker process is determined by a number of variable factors, including work load, other agency projects and shipping or manufacturing delays. As a result, the THC staff cannot be responsible for meeting local deadlines for any planned dedication events. Planning for such events should be finalized only after the marker is received.
8. **County or municipal funding concerns:** The THC marker process is not subject to county or municipal funding restrictions or fiscal year requirements, and the THC is not responsible for such deadlines. If county or municipal policies or procedures are a factor in planning for marker applications, it is the responsibility of the CHC to meet those requirements or to work out other considerations for the encumbrance of funds.
9. **Appeals of CHC action or inaction:** CHC approval must be obtained for all Official Texas Historical Markers. If a CHC rejects or fails to act on application within 90 days, the sponsor may appeal directly to the THC for redress. At that point, the CHC will be required to submit a written statement relative to its action or inaction on the application. If the CHC has determined the application is not eligible for an

Official Texas Historical Marker, it has the responsibility to provide the THC with a detailed report explaining reasons why and how it made that determination.

10. **Appeals of THC action:** The decision of the THC on any matter related to historical markers is final and can only be appealed for review by the THC if additional information not previously made available to or reviewed by the agency is submitted. Any such information must comply with documentation standards of the program, including coordination with the appropriate County Historical Commission (CHC). Once received, the THC will determine if an appeal is warranted and, if so, will act on the appeal and render a final determination. Appeals may not necessarily correspond with annual application deadlines, and appeals directed to the THC must allow ample time for review prior to those deadlines. All details of appeals, including timing and participating parties, will be directed by the THC.
11. **Payment due upon approval:** The THC cannot accept partial payment for markers, nor can it hold funds in abeyance as other funds are collected. Payment for all markers is due in full within 45 days of the notice of approval. Delayed payments will result in cancellation of applications.
12. **Marker placement:** The placement of historical markers should be carefully considered to ensure maximum accessibility and protection of historic resources. Whenever possible, a marker for a historic structure receiving the Recorded Texas Historic Landmark designation should be placed on a post rather than on the structure to avoid damaging the historic fabric of the structure. To avoid confusion regarding historical designation, subject markers may not be attached to non-historic buildings. Sponsors or CHCs are responsible for the physical placement of a historical marker, unless the site is on a state-maintained highway right-of-way, in which case the Texas Department of Transportation will be responsible for erecting the marker in consultation with the CHC.
13. **Highway Advance and Directional Signs:** TxDOT provides advance and directional guide signs for all historical markers on TxDOT right of way outside of city limits on conventional highways. Official policies on highway directional signs may be found in the *Signs and Markings Manual*, Chapter 7, Section 19, and the Texas Government Code, Section 442.0065(c).
14. **Accessibility:** Markers must be accessible to the public.
15. **Site considerations:** RTHL and HTC markers must be placed at the actual sites being commemorated.
16. **Applications as state records:** All applications, correspondence and support materials become the property of the THC and are subject to rules governing open records. Information from the records may be utilized by the CHCs and its researchers provided any citations of the information properly include mention of the THC and its marker file holdings.
17. **Official policies:** Official policies regarding the Official Texas Historical Marker program, Recorded Texas Historic Landmark designation and Historic Texas Cemetery designation are codified in the Texas Administrative Code, Title 13, Part 2, Chapter 21. RTHL properties are also subject to provisions of Texas Government Code, Section 442.006(f).
18. **Texas Historic Sites Atlas:** Through its Historic Sites Atlas, the THC provides online access to marker inscriptions and locational information. The THC maintains the database and adds, deletes or changes information as necessary and as staff time permits. Every effort is made to keep the information updated, but a variety of factors may cause delays in the process. The Atlas serves as the primary tool for researchers and others interested in the Official Texas Historical Marker program, and information can be downloaded as needed.
19. **Requests for file information:** The THC maintains marker files as public records and makes them available for researchers at the agency library, or available in compliance with the Texas Open Records Act.