



# State Memorial Highway or Bridge Naming

Protocols in Utah and Other States | August 9, 2022

## Overview

This memo examines three issues related to state memorial highway or bridge naming in Utah, Idaho, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and Virginia: authorizing body, process or purpose, and funding consideration. These states were chosen due to the comprehensive nature of their memorial programs. The table below provides a summary of each state with more information and sources under the state’s subheading.

State	Authorizing body	Process or Purpose	Funding Consideration
<b>Utah</b>	None outlined in code	UDOT has jurisdiction and control, or Legislature can pass a bill	Donations, general fund appropriation, or Transportation Fund
<b>Idaho</b>	Legislature	DOT must work with applicant on sign design, and may not designate a highway already designated	Donations/sponsoring organization
<b>Missouri</b>	DOT, Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight, or Legislature	Program specific	Donations/sponsoring organization
<b>Nebraska</b>	Governor	Requires resolution of support from the local jurisdictions where the memorial naming will be.  Encourages off-highway memorials to honor individual fallen service members.	Donations/sponsoring organization
<b>Oklahoma</b>	Legislature	To honor individuals deserving of commendation for their active involvement in a project or for outstanding service to the nation, the state, or their community.	Donations/sponsoring organization (with some exemptions)
<b>Texas</b>	Local government or Legislature	Only designated by name via legislation and only if the person is deceased and was significant in the state’s history or in the lives of the people of Texas.	Not specified



State	Authorizing body	Process or Purpose	Funding Consideration
		If a local government designates a part of the highway system, it is not marked with signage. The highway is still only marked by the regular highway number.	
<b>Virginia</b>	Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) or Legislature	<p>CTB can only designate a memorial naming after someone deceased or to honor a group of people.</p> <p>Legislature can honor someone living, deceased, or for any purpose/event.</p>	<p>Commonwealth Transportation Funds if honoring a state official killed in the line of duty</p> <p>All other signs must be paid for by the local authority, the family, or support group</p>

**Utah**

Currently, there are 20 special designations highways listed in Utah statute but there is no statutory scheme set forth in Utah Code that governs the process for naming a state highway. Highways can either be named through the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), via legislative action through a special designation under Title 72, Chapter 4, Part 2, Special Designations, or through the Utah State Scenic Byway Program under Title 72, Chapter 4, Part 3.

*Special Designations*

Although Utah Code does not expressly address how state highways are named, Section 72-3-102 provides that UDOT has “jurisdiction and control” over all highways, roads, and streets that the Legislature designates as state highways under Title 72, Chapter 4, Designation of State Highways Act. UDOT, which has jurisdiction and control over state highways, may name a state highway regardless of whether the highway is entirely within a single county, municipality, or metro township. If a special designation occurs through legislative action without an appropriation from the general fund or other funding identified (such as donations), the cost of the signage comes out of the state’s Transportation Fund.

*Utah State Scenic Byway Program*

Statute does define the process for naming a State Scenic Byway. The Utah State Scenic Byway Committee consists of 13 members appointed by the governor and the committee is chaired by someone from the Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity. Nomination or designation must be supported by the county, city, or town that the highway runs through. The committee has rulemaking authority and must establish by rule the administration of the scenic byway program, the criteria a highway shall possess to be designated as a scenic byway, nomination or identification process, and process for removing the designation.



## Idaho

Idaho designates memorial highways through legislative action (Title 40, Highways and Bridges). The state's Department of Transportation places and maintains signage and cannot place markers where other current special designations exist. The department is instructed to work with the applicant on sign design and may accept donations from groups to create, install, and maintain the signs. In September 2021, Idaho announced the official designation of US-26 as the "POW-MIA Highway" which is part of a nationally coordinated effort to name the highway that runs from Oregon to Wyoming in honor of prisoners of war and those missing in action.

## Missouri

Missouri has three designation programs:

- **Memorial Highway and Bridge:** can be done via legislation or application. The legislative process is to honor a fallen service member/EMS/state employee killed in the line of duty. The application process is for individuals, organizations, an event, or place. Both options cost between \$3,200-\$4,000 for two signs. Legislator sponsorship and written consent from the honoree's family is required for both processes. For the application process, if the honoree is a person, they must be deceased for at least two years. The applicant needs to submit 100 signatures of residents from the area supporting the designation.
- **Heroes Way:** Missouri DOT (MoDOT) reviews the application, and the Joint Committee on Transportation Oversight conducts the final review and approval. The signs cost between \$3,200-\$4,000 for two signs. The honoree must have been a US Armed Forces Missouri resident killed in action, and applicants need a legislator to sponsor the designation and submit written consent from the honoree's family.
- **Drunk Driving Victim:** MoDOT reviews and approves the application and the program is only meant for victims, not in memory of an individual who drove impaired. One marker costs \$600. The applicant must include a copy of the MO Law Enforcement's Report or other supporting documentation that one of the vehicle operators was impaired and written consent from the honoree's family.

## Nebraska

All requests for naming of state highways or bridges are managed by the Department of Transportation and the purpose of the program is to bring public attention and recognize officially a person, organization, or other entity who has contributed significantly to the well-being of others. The department refers requests to the State Highway Commission for review and a recommendation is made to the director and governor. The governor has final approval. The State Highway Commission may only select one name for consideration annually. Requests can be submitted at any time and applicants are allowed to make a presentation before the commission in December before it makes a single recommendation. Not all applicants are invited to make a presentation.

A request to name a highway segment must be submitted with a resolution of support from each county board or city council whose jurisdiction the segment occupies.



Nebraska acknowledges that there are not enough highways to honor every fallen service member. Cities and counties are encouraged to establish local memorials off the state highway system to honor fallen service members.

Requests are evaluated by the following criteria:

- A person must be deceased at least 5 years
- A person must either have been born in Nebraska, have lived a significant portion of their life in the state, or made a contribution to society that was affected by their residency in the state.
- Primary consideration will be given to contributions in the field of public affairs, the arts, or sciences. Secondary consideration will be given to contributions to entertainment or athletics.

The sponsoring organization is responsible for the cost of the signs (one in each direction) and the maintenance or replacement costs.

## **Oklahoma**

Memorial highway and bridge designations are approved through the legislature. Highways, bridges, and other facilities which are part of the state highway system may be considered for dedication in honor of individuals deserving of commendation for their active involvement in a project or for outstanding service to the nation, the state, or their community. Proposals for the dedication of state highway facilities should specifically state the accomplishments upon which the proposal is based.

Per statute, signage for memorial naming of highways and bridges on state highways shall be paid for by the group sponsoring or requesting the signage. The Department of Transportation is required to establish a procedure to assess and collect the cost of the signs. The assessment of cost shall include the cost of the initial erection of the sign as well as the potential replacement or reconstruction of the sign. The cost of these signs shall be based on an average of the cost of signs erected during the preceding fiscal year, as reported by the Department of Transportation.

Signage in honor of the following is exempt from payment requirements:  
members of the US Armed Forces who were killed while participating in a contingency operation  
members of the Oklahoma Highway Patrol fallen in the performance of their duties  
peace officers fallen in the performance of their duties  
first responders fallen in the performance of their duties

## **Texas**

Memorial highways are named through the state legislature or by a local government which works with the appropriate Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) district for highway signing. Texas code states that the Texas Transportation Commission, the governing body of TxDOT, cannot designate part of the highway system, bridge, or street by a name or symbol other than the regular highway number. A part of the highway system, bridge, or street can



only be designated by name via legislation and only if the person is deceased and was significant in the state's history or in the lives of the people of Texas.

If a local government designates a part of the highway system, it is not marked with signage. The highway is only marked by the regular highway number.

## **Virginia**

[The Commonwealth Transportation Board](#) (CTB) can name a bridge, highway, or interchange to honor a deceased person or a group of people, such as "Vietnam War Veterans." The Virginia General Assembly, which is the legislative body of the state, may name a bridge, highway, or interchange for any purpose or person, whether deceased or living, through legislative action.

Signs in honor of a state official killed during the performance of their official duties are paid from the Commonwealth Transportation Funds. All other signs must be paid for by the local authority or the family or support group.

The procedure for naming a bridge, highway, or interchange is as follows:

1. Localities and state agencies are urged to discuss the proposed memorial naming with the Department of Transportation Residency Administrator for the area in which the facility is located prior to passing a formal resolution. State agencies headed by an individual instead of a board may request a name change by letter.
2. A request, in the form of a formal resolution from the locality or a letter or resolution from an agency head, must be provided to the Residency Administrator or other designated local VDOT manager.
3. The Residency Administrator forwards the request, with resolution or letter, to VDOT's District Office for review.
4. The Residency or District forwards the request, with resolution or letter, to the Maintenance Division's Roadway Inventory Management Unit for review and action.
5. VDOT's Maintenance Division prepares the necessary CTB resolution, ensures the action item is on the CTB agenda, and presents the request to the CTB.
6. If the CTB approves, the Maintenance Division notifies the District Office and Residency Administrator responsible for installing the signs.
7. The Residency notifies the Maintenance Division when the signs are installed.