POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR NAMING ROADS, BRIDGES and FERRIES

Pursuant to NCGS 136.18(8), the North Carolina Board of Transportation may name roads, bridges, or ferries. This is the policy and procedures approved by the North Carolina Board of Transportation for carrying out said road, bridge, or ferry naming.

In this policy, unless otherwise provided, the following terms will have the following meanings:

- 1) "Board" shall mean the North Carolina Board of Transportation
- 2) "Full board" shall mean at minimum the majority of full membership of the North Carolina Board of Transportation
- 3) "Department" shall mean the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT)
- 4) "Committee" shall mean the Road, Bridge and Ferry Naming Committee of the North Carolina Board of Transportation.

I. Road, Bridge, and Ferry Naming Committee of the Board of Transportation.

- a. Committee makes recommendation to the full board regarding approval of requested road, bridge, and ferry namings.
- b. Committee acts in response to local resolutions.
- c. Committee can, at its discretion, recommend to the Board to remove a honorary sign.
- d. North Carolina Department of Transportation Secretary and Board Chairman are cochairs of the Committee, which call meetings and approve the agenda.
- e. A quorum is necessary for approval of resolutions; a quorum is a simple majority of Committee members.

II. Criteria for honoree. In order to have a road, bridge, or ferry named in honor of an individual, that individual:

- a. Must be living, or be deceased for a year or longer.
- b. Must not be currently serving or pursuing a term as an elected official (local, state, or federal).
- c. Must be or have been a North Carolina (NC) resident. Residence verification is a person who filed NC taxes and/or is registered to vote as a NC resident. Proof of residency is to be provided by the requesting party at the time the formal resolution is submitted.
- d. Must have made notable local, state, and/or national contributions and/or have significant accomplishments.
- e. Must not already have another state-owned road, bridge, or ferry named for him/her. The Board does not name more than one facility for the same individual. Requests for duplicate family members reviewed on case by case basis.
- f. May be a state law enforcement officer (e.g., Highway Patrol) killed in the line of duty.
- g. Municipal officials, employees, and law enforcement officers (including those killed in the line of duty) should be recognized with a municipally owned bridge in lieu of a state owned bridge except in extraordinary circumstances, such as when a local law enforcement officer is killed directly in the line of duty on the state owned bridge to be named.
- h. Must have strong local support with regards to the road, bridge, or ferry naming; resolutions passed by Municipal Councils and County Commissions must be unanimous. The Board does not mediate local disagreements.
- i. Must have the support of the family with regards to the road, bridge, or ferry naming.
- j. Additional Criteria for Individual Military Designations:

- i. Recipient of Valor Medals as designated by Defense Department (listed below) are eligible for individual road or bridge designations.
 - 1. Medal of Honor
 - 2. Distinguished Service Cross
 - 3. Silver Star
 - 4. Navy Cross
 - 5. Air Force Cross
- ii. Verification of the award shall be provided by the requesting party at the time the formal resolution is submitted.
- iii. Medal of Honor recipients are eligible for interstate designations; other levels would be US or NC routes.
- **III. Specific criteria for named road or bridge.** In order for a road or bridge to be named in honor of an individual, that road or bridge must be already constructed, or within 3 months of its expected construction completion date.

IV. Process for Road, Bridge, and Ferry Naming Requests

- a. Requesting party fills out Road, Bridge, and Ferry Road Naming Application form and submits to the contact person on the form.
- b. NCDOT staff review application and notify the applicant of the result of the review. If the request does not meet basic qualifications, it will not proceed. If the request does meet basic qualifications, the applicant will be notified of next steps (items c-f below).
- c. Local government draft a resolution. (It is the responsibility of the applicant to work directly with the local government to obtain the necessary resolution for submittal to the Board.) The resolution should specify what facility is to be named and who is to be honored, but not what name should appear on the sign. This will be worked out between the Department and the local governing body apart from the resolution, consistent with the parameters spelled out in Section V.a of this document.
- d. Local government(s) pass(es) resolution(s) in a public forum.
- e. If the facility to be named is in more than one jurisdiction, resolutions from all jurisdictions are required.
- f. Resolution(s), along with all required supporting documentation (minutes from meeting where resolution was passed, completed character certification form, a minimum of three recommendation letters, and an indication of family support; see Section V of this document for more detail), are forwarded to the Department.
- g. Once all materials are received, the request is placed on an upcoming Board of Transportation Road, Bridge, and Ferry Naming Committee agenda for consideration. Road, Bridge, and Ferry Naming Committee agendas are posted publicly on the web.
- h. The Board member representing the area making the request must endorse the request and present it to the Committee.
- i. If the Committee approves the requested naming:
 - i. A naming request reviewed and recommended by the Committee will be "held" for at least one month before being considered by the full board.
 - ii. The Board drafts a resolution for vote by the full board. The Board resolution will specify what facility is to be named, who is to be honored, and what name should appear on the sign. The Department has final authority regarding sign design, including text.
 - iii. This item is placed on the agenda of the full board after the Committee approves it, if timing criteria are met (such as construction completion date or death date

- in the case of a deceased honoree), or is held until such time as the timing criteria are met.
- iv. The Department reviews the requested name for the sign and the requested designation limits. The Department communicates with the local government regarding any problems with the requested name (e.g., too long) or with the requested limits (e.g., overlaps with an already designated facility or exceeds allowable length) and suggests satisfactory modifications. (See Sections IV.a and IV.b below for length specifications for name and designated facility, respectively.) The Department and local governments will concur in writing with mutually agreed upon name to be put on the sign and the limits of the designation.
- j. If/when the full board approves the requested naming:
 - i. The local government and the NCDOT Division are notified in writing of the approval and the required payment. Payment is due to the Department upon notification that the honorary designation has been approved by the Board. Signs will not be manufactured until payment is received.
 - ii. The NCDOT Communications Office plans a naming ceremony if one is desired by the local government.
 - iii. Signs are installed. Honorary signs will be ground mounted; overhead signs will not be installed. Signs will be installed at the beginning and ending termini of the approved roadway segment, and will not be installed on exits, Y-lines, or intersecting roadways.
- V. Locally Provided Documentation/Materials. The following documentation and information is required before any naming request will be considered by the Board.
 - a. **Requested name to be placed on sign.** Signs may include up to one title, one first name, one initial, one last name, and one suffix, to be designated by the local governing body, as long as length limits are met. The Department will communicate to the local governing body applicable text length limits. (The entire name is limited to one line of text; the font size of the text depends on the design speed of the road where the sign is to be installed.)
 - b. **Background information on nominee.** Sufficient information must be provided to explain why the naming is warranted; for example, qualifications at the local, state, and/or national level resulting in significant contributions and accomplishments. If the designee is recently deceased, the request will be reviewed after a one year waiting period except for extenuating circumstances. A fatality resulting from a crash, while tragic, is alone not sufficient to qualify for a naming designation.
 - c. **Description of what is requested to be named.** The Board will consider naming roads, bridges, and ferries (not buildings). For roads, the distance of dedication should be 5 miles or less. Law enforcement officers will be honored with bridge dedications in lieu of highways.
 - d. **Resolutions from all local governing bodies associated with or affected by the request.** City or town councils and/or county commissions must adopt resolutions in a public forum and in sufficient detail to adequately justify the request. The road, bridge, or ferry route must be entirely within the boundaries of the requesting governing body or bodies.
 - e. **Character Certification Form.** Local government must attest, using a form provided by the Department, to the character of the honoree.
 - f. **Strong public input and support.** Explain the degree to which the public supports the request and had notice of action with an opportunity for input. To help illustrate this

- support, the local governing bodies shall provide a minimum of three recommendation letters from civic, service, or business organizations.
- g. **Family support.** The requesting party should have the family's support for the road, bridge, or ferry naming request including agreement with the requested location of the dedication.
- h. **Minutes from the Municipal Council/County Commission meetings where the resolution was passed.** This is to substantiate that the resolution was passed in a public forum, and that the body was unanimous in its support.
- i. A willingness of the local government or designee to pay an administrative fee of \$2000 to help offset costs of the program. This fee is not due unless and until the full board approves the requested naming.
- **VI. Alternatives.** In the event the requested naming does not meet the criteria, or is not approved by the Board for any reason, the local government has options to honor the individual, including, but not limited to:
 - a. **Adopt a Highway.** Local governments could consider the "Adopt a Highway" program as an alternative method of honoring an individual or group.
 - b. **Municipal road or bridge.** Municipalities may name municipally owned streets or bridges in honor of individuals or groups. This does not require review or approval by the Department or the Board.
 - c. **Blue Star Memorial Highway**. The Department has over 1,000 miles designated as the Blue Star Highway Network including all interstates, US routes, and most NC routes. This extensive network honors all veterans and military groups in the state.

VII. Blue Star Memorial Highway Network

- a. Requests for honorary designations for specific groups such as Bladen County Veterans or 100th Infantry, or a particular branch of the military are considered honored with the Blue Star Highway network.
- b. New interstate designations and segments are typically automatically added to the Blue Star Highway as completed.
- c. See attached information on Blue Star Memorial Highways.

APPENDIX: BLUE STAR MEMORIAL HIGHWAY INFORMATION

The Blue Star Memorial Highways date back to 1949 as tribute to the men and women of the nation's armed forces. There have been numerous other requests to name additional highways in the state for specific veterans or military groups. However, because of the extensive network of Blue Star Memorial Highways that already commemorate our armed forces, the Department and Board of Transportation's Road, Bridge and Ferry Naming Committee consider such request as duplicative. The Blue Star covers all military personnel and conflicts. The Committee has been historically consistent in response with all groups.

The Department receives requests from small groups specific to a certain area (such as Bladen County Veterans Memorial Highway) to large groups like the Purple Heart or Vietnam Veterans. The Committee has consistently felt it would be difficult to pick and choose which requests were approved; likewise, it would be extremely difficult to approve all requests because of the number we receive. We encourage local officials to dedicate a municipally owned street or bridge within their boundaries, which needs no action by the Department or Board. Additionally, some counties have memorials at their courthouses or office facilities recognizing local military personnel.

Since 1997, the Department has had eleven requests for Veterans Memorial Highway designations (with slight modifications for the requesting party). These have not been approved due to the Blue Star Highway (BSH) network.

Due to legislative action, the Blue Star signage on US 70 reads "Blue Star and POW Memorial Highway" and I-95 through NC has a "Purple Heart Highway" designation.

The Blue Star designation is considered an "overlay" designation for the lengthy segments of roadways. Certain segments of these roadways may be dedicated for individuals.

The Blue Star Highway (BSH) designations in North Carolina to date:

- I-26 throughout the state
- I-40 throughout the state
- I-77 throughout the state
- I-85 throughout the state
- I-95 throughout the state
- US 70 throughout the state
- US 301 throughout the state
- US 64 from TN state line to Williamston
- US 158 from Elizabeth City to Nags Head
- US 158 from Elizabeth City to Roanoke Rapids
- US 158 from Mocksville to Roanoke Rapids
- US 421 in Wilkes County
- US 421 in Yadkin County
- US 17 from Williamston to Elizabeth City
- NC 24 from US 17 in Jacksonville to NC 172
- US 74 from NC 38 in Hamlet to US 220 in Rockingham
- Sparta Parkway in Alleghany County

The Board typically adds each new interstate segment to the BSH network as it is completed.

The original Blue Star Historical Markers are associated with the Garden Club of North Carolina. The markers are the shield shaped, grey markers more associated with historical sites and under the direction of the Department of Cultural Resources. The Department has a link on its website with mapping and information on these markers (http://ncdot.gov/programs/environmental/bluestar/).

In May 2005, the Board of Transportation approved the installation of new color signage across the state to improve and expand the recognition along the BSH designation (see attached map and sign sample). The increase in signs and new format has been well received across the state. The Department has installed additional signs as requested by local officials.

We believe North Carolina has the largest Blue Star Highway system in the country with over 1,300 miles of highways across the state.

During times of active military conflicts, the Department sees an increase in the honorary sign requests for individuals either killed in the line of duty, recipients of medals and for outstanding service, or for more specific local units and groups. Requests are not limited to recent conflicts, but also for WWI, WWII, Korean, Vietnam, and Desert Storm veterans. The Department continues to support the BSH for recognition of the extensive number of military personnel, branches, military bases located in our state.

At this time, staff is working with the Office of Veterans Affairs to gather some statistical information on military personnel (active, deceased, or veterans) in our state to provide to the Board of Transportation's Road, Bridge and Ferry Naming Committee and the Department's senior management.