

CHAPTER 264

AN ACT authorizing the New Jersey Historical Commission to establish a program to encourage local government units, nonprofit charitable organizations, and civic organizations to recognize sites of historical and cultural significance with standardized roadside markers, and supplementing Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

C.18A:73-25.5 Findings, declarations, determinations relative to recognition of historical, cultural sites with roadside markers.

1. The Legislature finds and declares that New Jersey, one of the original 13 colonies and crossroads of the American revolution, has a distinguished heritage, as evidenced by the abundance of sites witnessing significant historical and cultural events in the nation's history and important scientific and technological discoveries, as well as being home to many famous men and women who have made lasting contributions to the State and the world; and that it is the responsibility of the State of New Jersey to encourage local government units and civic organizations to recognize these sites by the placement of historically accurate roadside markers.

The Legislature further finds and declares that New Jersey has lagged behind other states in developing a standardized program to recognize sites of historical and cultural significance; that many of the existing markers Statewide are old and damaged; that no system is currently in place to inventory existing markers; and that there are many sites in the State, in addition to those listed on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places, which are of significant historical and cultural acclaim, and worthy of recognition through the placement of roadside markers.

The Legislature therefore determines that it is in the public interest to authorize the New Jersey Historical Commission to plan and carry out a program to encourage local government units, nonprofit charitable organizations, and civic organizations to provide for the placement of roadside markers at locations of historical and cultural significance in New Jersey; and that the creation of such a program would not only serve as a tribute to the people, places and events that have helped shape the State, the nation, and the world, but would serve to enhance community pride and encourage tourism throughout the State.

C.18A:73-25.6 Program to identify, propose sites of historical, cultural significance.

2. The New Jersey Historical Commission, in consultation with the New Jersey Heritage Tourism Task Force established pursuant to section 1 of P.L.2006, c.60, is authorized to establish a program to encourage local government units, nonprofit charitable organizations, and civic organizations to identify and propose sites of historical and cultural significance in the State, to be recognized by the placement of roadside markers. The markers shall feature a standardized design bearing the State seal, indicating that the site has been approved by the commission and that the marker meets standards for historical accuracy. In developing the program required pursuant to this section, the commission shall consult with the Department of Transportation to establish standards for the design, placement, and location of the roadside markers.

C.18A:73-25.7 Application process; vendors; registry; notification program.

3. a. The New Jersey Historical Commission shall develop an application process to be followed by local government units, nonprofit charitable organizations, and civic organizations to identify and propose sites for inclusion in the program. An application shall

include but is not limited to the location of the proposed site and evidence to support its historical or cultural significance, and the proposed text for the roadside marker. If an application submitted by a local government unit, nonprofit charitable organization, or civic organization is approved by the commission and by the appropriate entity having jurisdiction over the roadway along which the marker is to be placed, the requesting local government unit, nonprofit charitable organization, or civic organization, as appropriate, may purchase, through an approved vendor, and erect a marker bearing the State seal, designating that the site has been approved by the commission and that the marker meets standards for historical accuracy.

b. The commission shall compile and maintain a listing of approved vendors and shall negotiate, to the extent practicable and feasible, a volume discounted rate for the purchase of markers by local government units, nonprofit charitable organizations, or civic organizations.

c. The commission shall compile and maintain a registry of approved sites and an inventory of markers erected pursuant to this act.

d. The commission shall conduct a notification program designed to inform local government units, nonprofit charitable organizations, and civic organizations of the existence of the program, through both printed materials and an Internet site.

C.18A:73-25.8 Duties, authority of commission.

4. a. The New Jersey Historical Commission, within the limits of funds appropriated therefor or otherwise made available to it, may (1) commence the roadside marker program as soon as may be practicable, and (2) take any administrative or personnel action as may be necessary to implement the provisions of this act.

b. The commission shall be authorized to raise funds, through direct solicitation or other fundraising events, alone or with other groups, and may accept gifts, grants and bequests from individuals, corporations, foundations, governmental agencies, public and private organizations, and institutions, to defray the commission's administrative expenses and to carry out its purposes as set forth in this act. The funds, gifts, grants, or bequests received pursuant to this subsection shall be deposited into an account in the Department of the Treasury and allocated and annually appropriated to the Department of State to defray the commission's administrative expenses in connection with implementing this act and to accomplish the goals and purposes set forth in this act.

5. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 17, 2010.