

Scenic Highway Overview

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Background

Tennessee's Scenic Highway program was established by the Scenic Highway Act of 1971. The Act provided for a network of routes that have logical termini and are alternative routes to highly traveled roads; preserve and protect historic, scenic, and natural qualities, furnish motorists with safe and attractive routes to experience the beauty of Tennessee.

Scenic Highway Sign (TN-23)

The SCENIC HIGHWAY sign is intended to identify sections of highway designated as part of the Scenic Highway System in accordance with Sections 54-17-101 et seq., Tennessee Code Annotated.



Which Routes Are Eligible?

The Scenic Highways Program offers the most flexibility for route eligibility. Scenic Highway routes can be either local/county roads or Tennessee State Routes. Unlike the Tennessee Parkways Program, Scenic Highway routes are not required to intersect with or have termini adjacent to other routes designated as scenic.

How is a Route Designated as a Scenic Highway?

To apply for a Scenic Highway designation, begin by providing your State Representative or State Senator with a written request that conveys how a designation will be used to preserve the special character of a route and outline any organized, local support for designation.

What are the Benefits to Scenic Highway Designation?

The Tennessee General Assembly codified regulations for the program within the law, TCA § 54-27-114, which are detailed in the graphic on the next page. Preservation of historic, scenic, and natural qualities along a Scenic Highway is accomplished with regulations that address building heights, junkyards, outdoor advertising, and illegal dumping.

Building Heights: When located below the highway, exposed portions of new construction located on property within 1,000 feet of a Scenic Highway shall not exceed a height of 35 feet above the level of the highway. When located above the level of the highway, building height cannot exceed 35 feet above the ground line of the property.

Junkyards: The construction, use or operation of junkyards and auto dismantling establishments within 2,000 feet of any road or highway is prohibited. This applies to designated routes existing outside the corporate limits of any city or town.

Outdoor Advertising: The construction, use, or operation of any new advertising structure within 2,000' of any road or highway is prohibited. This applies to designated routes existing outside the corporate limits of any city or town. Scenic designation, however, does not mandate the removal existing outdoor advertising devices.

Illegal Dumping: Illegal dumping is prohibited in Tennessee. Along Scenic Highway routes, additional fines and penalties apply. Dump sites within 500 feet of a designated route are eligible for harsher criminal penalties and double fines.

Where Can I Learn More About Scenic Highway Routes?

On the Official Tennessee Transportation Map, Scenic Highways are highlighted in orange. Routes adopted into the Scenic Highway system, both as part of the program's authorizing legislation, and in all subsequent years are codified in TCA § 54-17-114. Below is a statewide map of routes included as part of the Scenic Highway System.

