

“Here’s Your Sign...” — And It Points to 160 Years of History

Pickens County Unveils New Highway 11 Wayfinder to Historic Liberia Community

MAY 29, 2026 -- PICKENS COUNTY, S.C. — Comedian Bill Engvall made the phrase “Here’s Your Sign” famous as a punchline. But in Pickens County, a newly installed sign along Scenic Highway 11 carries a far more meaningful message.

The new Wayfinder sign directs travelers to the Historic Liberia Community — a remarkable African American settlement founded by formerly enslaved people more than 160 years ago that still stands today as a testament to faith, perseverance, self-reliance, and community.

Located in northern Pickens County, the Liberia Community includes the historic Soapstone Baptist Church, a one-room schoolhouse, a historic cemetery, and the Cherokee soapstone mining area that helped shape the region’s early history.

The church remains active today, connecting generations past and present while preserving one of the Upstate’s most important cultural landscapes.

“This sign is more than a tourism marker,” said Mable Owens Clarke, the great granddaughter of the community’s founders. “It is an invitation to learn, reflect, and experience a place where history, faith, and resilience come together.” She continued, “We are so thankful for the support of Pickens County in helping draw attention to this special place.”

The site offers visitors a unique opportunity to explore both African American and Native American history in one location. Long before European settlement, Cherokee people used the area’s soft soapstone to carve cooking vessels, pipes, and ceremonial items. Generations later, freed slaves established a thriving faith-centered community there despite enormous challenges during the Reconstruction era and beyond.

County leaders and preservation advocates say the new signage along Scenic Highway 11 will help introduce more residents and tourists to the area’s rich historical significance while strengthening heritage tourism in the Upstate.

“Sometimes a sign points to more than a destination. Sometimes it points to a story worth preserving. Our cultural heritage in Pickens County is broader and deeper than we imagine, and this is an important step toward recognizing all our citizens.” said Pickens County Administrator Ken Roper.

The Liberia Community has increasingly become a destination for visitors interested in African American history, Appalachian culture, Cherokee heritage, and early rural education.

Officials hope the new sign will encourage travelers to take a closer look at one of South Carolina’s hidden historic treasures.

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About the Historic Liberia Community--

The Historic Liberia Community in Pickens County traces its roots to the post-Civil War era when formerly enslaved families established a close-knit community centered around faith, education, and self-determination. Today, the area includes historic structures, cemetery grounds, and nearby Cherokee soapstone resources that together tell a broader story of resilience, craftsmanship, and cultural heritage in the South Carolina Upstate.

Intersection of SC Scenic Hwy 11 & Pleasant Grove Road

To Learn More About the Liberia Community and Soapstone Baptist Church:
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