



**OhioSE**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**Press Release:** For Immediate Release

### **Sewah Studios Announces Expansion in Marietta, Ohio**

**Marietta, Ohio: December 14, 2023** — Sewah Studios Inc., America’s leading manufacturer of cast aluminum roadside historic markers, announced today plans to invest nearly \$500,000 to expand its facility in Marietta, Ohio, creating five new jobs.

Founded in 1927 by E.M. Hawes, the small sign business began in an old organ factory. Hawes (the reverse spelling of which is Sewah) wanted to develop a roadside marker program for automobile tourists. Ninety years ago, using cast aluminum was unheard of to make historical plaques – bronze, wood, and ferrous metals were primarily used, but none were practical for the long term and therefore, few historical markers were being produced.

After 18 months of testing, Hawes revealed sample aluminum castings that he felt could be the solution. After commissioning pattern letters to fit his signs, he invented the Sewah script and in 1929, won the contract to create plaques to mark the Old Revolutionary Trail for the state of Ohio. These markers were the first of the thousands of roadside historical markers that are now seen throughout the United States.

Nearly 96 years later, Sewah Studios is owned by Bradford Smith, the third generation of the Smith family to run the business. The company specializes in making cast aluminum historical markers primarily for state and local historical associations and has standing contracts with 44 states, including Ohio. Today, with over 22 employees, Sewah produces more than 1,200 markers each year.

Sewah Studios is currently operating at full capacity at its Marietta facility. “After the surge of post Covid ordering coupled with increased interest in historical markers nationwide we must expand the operation to keep up with historical marker demand,” said Bradford Smith, President of Sewah Studios. “The expansion includes a 3,000-square-foot building addition, which would allow for an additional production line in the foundry area and added storage and shipping space. This would allow the team to increase its production to meet any level of demand now and in the future.”

“We celebrate Sewah Studios’ 96-year history and nationwide recognition,” said OhioSE Vice President Katy Farber, “and are gratified to see the company enter a new chapter of expansion based upon the company’s craftsmanship and the productivity of its Marietta workforce.”

JobsOhio supported the project with a \$25,000 JobsOhio Inclusion Grant and Ohio Southeast Economic Development assisted the company with the grant process. The JobsOhio Inclusion Grant exists to provide financial support for eligible projects in designated distressed communities and/or for businesses owned by underrepresented populations across the state.

“Washington County is home to several globally unique and competitive companies, and Sewah Studios is a perfect example of this fact,” said Jesse Roush, Executive Director of the Southeast Ohio Port

Authority. “I commend Brad Smith and his team for making this investment in their business, and we applaud JobsOhio and OhioSE for supporting Sewah's growth.”

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**Sewah Studios Inc.** is America’s leading manufacturer of cast aluminum roadside historic markers. Founded in 1927, Sewah Studios produces over 1,200 historical markers each year. Learn more at [www.sewahstudios.com](http://www.sewahstudios.com).

The **Southeastern Ohio Port Authority (SeOPA)** is the lead economic development agency in Washington County, Ohio. SeOPA focuses primarily on site and infrastructure development to attract and retain businesses and jobs, along with conduit financing, planning, and advocacy on behalf of the County.

**Ohio Southeast Economic Development (OhioSE)** is the JobsOhio Network Partner for southern, eastern, and southeastern Ohio, providing economic development work and resources in 25 rural counties; they are the newest and geographically the largest of the six regions across the state. OhioSE partners closely with regional development districts, local economic development offices, state agencies, and other entities to expand, retain, and attract businesses in the counties they serve. Learn more at [OhioSE.com](http://OhioSE.com).

**JobsOhio** is a private nonprofit economic development corporation designed to drive job creation and new capital investment in Ohio through business attraction, retention and expansion. The organization also works to seed talent production in its targeted industries and to attract talent to Ohio through [Find Your Ohio](#). JobsOhio works with six regional partners across Ohio: [Dayton Development Coalition](#), [Ohio Southeast Economic Development](#), [One Columbus](#), [REDI Cincinnati](#), [Regional Growth Partnership](#) and [Team NEO](#). Learn more at [www.jobsohio.com](http://www.jobsohio.com). Follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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