

WINTER 2024

Current News and Comments from the Pennsylvania
Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association



KEY NEWS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

At last fall's Mid-Atlantic States Cemetery and Funeral Conference, Lee Longino, President of the International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFCA) spoke to all attendees. I resonated with his his comments about their guiding principles: ICCFA strives to provide exceptional education, networking opportunities, and legislative guidance. If you go to [our website](#), PCCFA bills itself as promoting advocacy, education, and preservation. When asked about his new position with the ICCFA, Longino said, "I am extremely passionate about our profession and am constantly seeking out ways to drive relevancy." I see relevancy as perceived value. To me, relevancy is when a cemetery, crematory, or funeral home sees the value in being a part of PCCFA.

In January, I got a call from a member saying that their accountant was questioning the value in renewing their membership. While happy to send the caller our benefits of membership, it made me stop and wonder how we might have failed them that they didn't believe strongly enough in our value that they had to reach out for help explaining it. In fairness, I have never seen anyone from their association attend our conferences so maybe they haven't needed our education programs and networking opportunities. As a cemetery that has crematory on their sign, surely our work on the legislative bill lowering cremation temperatures should have shown them that we advocate for meaningful legislation relief.

During my term as your president, you will hear me address relevancy and value. To this end, I plan on sending out a survey in the coming weeks. Please take the time and respond so we can address your priorities as we revisit ours.

On another subject, last year members of the board at Bellefonte Union Cemetery bought a PCCFA membership as a way of honoring their president, James Baldwin. Doing a recent lookup on the internet about the cemetery, I found a television interview with Mr. Baldwin and other members of the cemetery board. One of the speakers shocked me with her reference to a TikTok video, @ladytaphos, on headstone restoration having over a million views. She went on to say she is pushing TikTok to attract young volunteers to come out and apply the skills in real life at their cemetery. Who knew there is even a group- #gravetok?

Thank you all, Ernie Petersen, President

PCCFA SUPPORT FOR HB1246 LOWERING CREMATION TEMPERATURES

By Ernest Petersen

Please make time to call your Pennsylvania State Senator today and ask them to support HB1246, lowering the minimum cremation temperature to 1600 degrees (down from 1800 degrees). This is congruent with current industry standards and results in fewer emissions and lower fuel requirements. Over the last several years this issue has been vetted by industry stakeholders and the Department of Environmental Protection.

Passage of this bill will help providers with equipment longevity, lower costs for consumers and be more environmentally friendly.

If you need more detail, please see the below letter from PCCFA explaining the bill.

[Read the Letter of Support](#)

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SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS

By S. Brooke Neel

>>> PICTURES/VIDEO

Visuals help a lot. You can use a free site like [pexels](#) for hi-resolution photos. For Instagram/Facebook, short video reels are more likely to be viewed than a still photo or stand-alone text. This can be as easy as going outside with your phone and recording a quick clip (5-15 seconds) then posting it as a story instead of regular Facebook post for higher engagement/views. Instagram especially is very visual, while Facebook still has a lot of image/text posts with more content heavy text. If you have an Instagram account you need to post daily. Instagram is all about images and short video reels. This platform opens the door to new demographics that are no longer on Facebook. Instagram posts you share to Facebook will appear as a post in your Facebook Feed and profile but the audience may be different.

>>> CONSISTENT/RELEVANT CONTENT

Create a monthly calendar. You can schedule with tools like Canva or Hootsuite to make life easier. If you are feeling lost on what to post, consider completing a [social media strategy kit](#). It could be useful for goal setting and monitoring. The nice thing about social media channels is you can view your audience, the gender/age breakdown, even when your followers are online to post at the right time of day. They say to post once a day on Facebook. I don't even do that. I schedule 2-3 posts a week that are relevant then mix in event information. Sometimes sprinkling in a spontaneous photo/video is nice. Are the autumn leaves popping, post it! If you have a connected Instagram account, you want to be posting daily if possible. Post about your facilities, packages, and events (your core content) but mix it up with more light-hearted content like quotes or a special happening at the cemetery/funeral home so it is not so heavy all the time. Always include your website's URL to increase your traffic.

>>> PAID ADVERTISING

Boosting or paying for an ad on Facebook or Instagram is always going to get you more traction. Using the built-in ads manager to create an ad gives you more flexibility into selecting your audience, placement, etc. Not everyone has the budget for this but it is the best way to track ROI (return on investment) and ROE (return on engagement) whether that is getting people back to a page on your website, calling your firm, or signing up for an event. You can literally collect the name/phone/email of those who click on your ad. This doesn't have to be big dollars. We paid \$20-50 to promote our summer events and had about 10-15 clicks to sign up for the events. We called each person to invite them and had a sign-in sheet on event day to determine the ROI. If you choose to pay for ads, make sure you set the objective of the ad for have a [direct marketing action](#), meaning someone has to click call now, sign up, or learn more so that you are getting a direct result of the dollars you are spending. It's old school but if you pay for ads, you can set up A/B testing. You may find a certain audience or placement is performing better than another. This will help you focus your messaging, branding, and marketing objectives.

>>> TRACKING

The best thing you can do is track everything. Log into Facebook account manager and track your followers and likes per month, what posts had your highest engagement, what paid ads had the highest direct action (clicking call now) so that you can track growth and what works. Do this quarterly and then at the year-end see where you are at. You may be surprised to see what content it performing, if you have grown followers by sharing posts or events with community channels other relevant organization pages. The nice thing about social media is every one is doing it in some way, shape or form. So you will be connecting with your audience, [even if it is just keeping your page updated with content](#).

>>> RESOURCES

- [Pexels](#)
- [Canva](#)
- [ChatGPT](#) - create a free account and ask it to give you social media post ideas - it's just scanning the internet for content!
- [The Ultimate Social Media Strategy Worksheet](#)
- [AI Picture Restorer](#) - may help your families

ONLINE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

PCCFA members can now renew their membership instantly online! For all new members, once your application and reviewed and approved by the executive team, an account/login will be created automatically after you make your first membership payment.

➤➤➤ BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- The eKeynews, a four times a year publication, delivered by e-mail.
- Two conferences a year with continuing education credits for funeral directors at PA locations. (Every other year, our fall conference is held in Atlantic City with four other states and there the education program provides credits and certifications.
- A discount on the MemorialPro insurance product from the Regan Agency, Inc.
- Constant Contact available for rapid communications. Suppliers take note!
- Access to our supplier members network.
- The PCCFA complaint hotline helping us help cemeteries with consumer issues.
- An annual legislative reception, to make sure your representatives know they can come to us for assistance with pending legislation and constituent issues.
- A lobbyist looking out for our best interests in Harrisburg.
- Access to other cemeterians to network and brainstorm amid the changing and evolving death care industry. Green burials, spotted lantern fly, etc.

ADVERTISE IN THE KEYNEWS

Do you want to reach the decision-makers? An ad in eKeyNews gives you that opportunity! You may reserve your ad placement online or more information call eKeyNews Editor Ernie Petersen at (814) 243-3837 or e-mail pccfa.exec.team@gmail.com.



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WHAT TO KNOW: LEGISLATIVE SESSION

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By David J. Michener & Gary Buss



»»» YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO ATTEND

Please join us on Tuesday, April 30th beginning at 5:30 p.m. at the Harrisburg Hilton Hotel.

PCCFA would very much like to have you, our members, meet each other and PCCFA's newly elected officers and directors at this reception. We are celebrating the 92nd Anniversary of our Association! If you have questions, please contact our office representatives. You may find a notice of the [annual meeting here](#).

»»» SUBMIT YOUR ISSUES

In addition to our current legislative agenda, we encourage members to submit any recent issues they wish for us to address with the state legislators. What are you concerned about in our industry? Where do we need to collectively focus efforts as an organization? Submit your concerns and issues to pccfa.exec.team@gmail.com.

»»» CONTACT YOUR SENATORS & REPRESENTATIVES

Please contact your own senators and representatives to attend and meet with PCCFA members and directors! We have made this process very simple. [Find here sample letters](#) to send to your legislators.

Simply edit the letter to include your name and organization and proper legislators, and sent via mail or email.

»»» FIND YOUR LEGISLATORS ONLINE

Members unsure of their legislators can go to www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/findyourlegislator/. Simply type in your address and the locator will say who your legislators' are and how to reach them. Easy!

THE NEW FUNERAL RULE

FTC IS SECRET SHOPPING

By Ernie Petersen

As you all may have heard by now, the FTC has secret shopped firms across the United States, and has publicly called out funeral homes who violated the current FTC guidelines of transparent price information.

In this FTC undercover phone sweep it was found that many funeral homes are still not complying when directly asked for price information. The [FTC Funeral Rule](#) was enacted in 1984. Now, incredibly almost 40 years later, non-compliance with price disclosure is apparently still an issue.

Failing to disclose price information is a violation of both the FTC Funeral Rule as well as the Pennsylvania State Board of Funeral Directors statute and rules and regulations. Potential fines are staggering, with some coming in over \$50,000 per violation!

Failure to comply with the FTC Funeral Rule can result in substantial monetary penalties in addition to that the PA Statute, Rules and Regulations violations which can result in additional fines up to \$10,000.

In the article below you'll find a list of funeral homes named which received letters. If you click on the name, it will take you to a copy of the letter they received complete with the address of the firm. Firms coast-to-coast were cited, including from Pennsylvania. Please be aware of the way price information is presented to the consumer. As we all await near-guaranteed changes to the FTC Funeral Rule which may require mandatory price information online (many already have price information available on their website, but many smaller organizations do not) we need to stay vigilant and protect the reputation of our industry, and the families in need seeking this information.

If you are unsure of if you are compliant or where to start, please contact PCCFA so we can get you in touch with the right people.

PAC AND LEGAL DEFENSE FUNDS

PAC and Legal Defense Funds
Who works with our state representatives to protect your business, consumer grievances and protects us from overly burdensome laws? PCCFA does! Support our efforts with your personal donation to the PCCFA PAC Fund. If you want to support PCCFA, with a business contribution, consider donating to the Legal Defense Fund.

For more information, contact Ernie Petersen at (814) 243-3837 or e-mail pccfa.exec.team@gmail.com

[Legislative Reception](#)



ANNUAL MEETING

The 94th annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Cemetery, Cremation, Funeral Association will take place on Monday, April 30, 2024 at 1:15 p.m. in the Leland Room, 2nd Floor, Harrisburg Hilton Hotel. The agenda includes the State of Association Address by President Ernest Petersen, the Treasurer's Report by John Yeatman, and the nominations and election of members to the board. If you are able, we hope PCCFA members will join us at the 2024 annual meeting.

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