

>>> NEWSLETTER <<< **WINTER 2025**

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



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all involved in the cemetery industry! Your actions in cemetery management reflect the forever commitment of your cemetery's founders. As my tenure as your president is in the "home stretch," here are a few things that I am thinking about:

Cemeteries hold a unique and vital place in the heritage of a community. They serve not only as final resting places, but also as historical records that reflect the cultural, social, and architectural narratives of the area. Often, they contain the graves of prominent figures and everyday citizens alike, providing insight into the community's values, traditions, and history.

Many cemeteries feature distinctive art and architecture, showcasing the craftsmanship of different eras. They can also be sites for community gatherings, remembrance ceremonies, and heritage walks, fostering a sense of connection among the community's residents.

Moreover, cemeteries often preserve local biodiversity, with trees and plants that contribute to the natural landscape. As living museums, they serve as reminders of the past and can inspire future generations to appreciate their roots and the importance of honoring those who came before us. Through community initiatives and educational programs, cemeteries can strengthen their role in the broader cultural fabric, ensuring they remain a cherished aspect of community heritage.

These thoughts were well articulated at our Fall Conference at the inspirational Laurel Hill Cemetery in Philadelphia. Accolades to event co-chairs Nancy Goldenberg, President and CEO, Laurel Hill Cemetery and Gary Buss, President, Arlington Cemetery for their efforts to make this an outstanding event for our members and suppliers. We have 2025 Spring Conference news ahead for you in this edition.

To our members, suppliers, advisors, and fiduciaries, wishing you a successful year ahead as you continue to serve families with compassion and respect, and safeguard your community's heritage.

Ernest L. Petersen, III, President

2025 SPRING CONFERENCE

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By Paul Simms, Conference Organizer and President-Elect

Please join us this summer as we gather together with industry professionals and leaders for a two-day comprehensive conference on June 8-10, 2025, at Kalahari Resorts & Conventions in the Pocono Mountains!

You can find registration, sponsorship and hotel information on our website. We look forward to announcing the conference speakers and agenda to you over the next few months.



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We thank this year's conference organizer and co-chairs Geoff Behrens and Scott Nulty, as well as our supplier representative Nick Timpe for their assistance in planning this event for our membership.

Next Steps:

- [Visit our website](#) for full conference details.
- Book your hotel room in our reserved block. [Click here for direct online booking.](#)
- Online registration is now available. [Click here for more event details.](#)

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

PAC AND LEGAL DEFENSE FUNDS

CEMETERY MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

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Co-Organized by Eric Wolverton and Jude Abraham

Join us for PCCFA's Cemetery Field Day at Whitemarsh Memorial Park

Join us for a comprehensive one-day Cemetery Maintenance Workshop hosted by the Pennsylvania Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association with a full day of vendor display and training/best practices!

Details:

- Wednesday, June 18th, 2025 from 9:00am-4:00pm
- Location: Whitemarsh Memorial Park, 1169 Limekiln Pike, Ambler, PA 19002

Seminar Highlights:

- Expert panel discussions on best practices
- Live demonstrations of equipment and techniques
- Networking opportunities with industry professionals
- Vendor showcase featuring latest cemetery maintenance solutions
- Round table discussion on future industry needs

Registration Fees:

- Attendees registration fee of \$150 which includes lunch and vendor giveaways. Bring two or more attendees and save \$25 for a rate of \$125.
- Suppliers/Vendors: \$250

Supplier Opportunities:

- Showcase your products and services
- Network with potential clients
- Contribute recommendations on panel discussion
- Demonstrate your products or services.

Who Should Attend:

- Cemetery managers and superintendents
- Grounds maintenance staff
- Industry suppliers and vendors

How to Register:

Visit our website at pccfa.com to register and pay online. For more information, contact us at PCCFA.exec.team@gmail.com. Don't miss this opportunity to enhance your cemetery maintenance knowledge and skills while connecting with industry peers!

Note: Supplier members are eligible to showcase their work. Space is limited, so register early to secure your spot.

CEMETERY WINTER MAINTENANCE

By Ernest L. Petersen, III, President

Winter cemetery maintenance is essential to ensure that the grounds remain respectful, safe, and aesthetically pleasing during the colder months. Here are ten key considerations and musts for effective winter maintenance:

- 1. Snow Removal** Regularly clear snow from main pathways, roads, and parking areas to ensure safe access for visitors. Clear snow from grave markers and headstones to maintain visibility and respect for the deceased. Light snow? Use your leaf blowers!
- 2. Ice Management** Use sand, gravel, or environmentally-friendly de-icing agents to prevent ice accumulation on pathways. Ensure proper drainage to reduce ice formation and water pooling. Please check with our Landscape Design Supplier Members for more information water management.
- 3. Protecting Flora** Trim back any dead or damaged branches that could fall due to snow or ice weight. Apply mulch around trees and shrubs to protect roots from extreme cold and temperature fluctuations. Please check with our Arborist Supplier Members for more information about tree and shrub management.
- 4. Grave Maintenance** Check headstones and monuments for stability and secure any that may be leaning or unstable. If feasible, use protective covers for vulnerable monuments to prevent damage from ice and snow.
- 5. Visitor Amenities** If possible, provide covered seating areas for visitors to rest and reflect. If restrooms cannot be winterized and accessible, communicate in signage.
- 6. Safety Measures** Place clear signage to indicate any potentially hazardous areas, such as icy patches or closed sections. If open past sunset, ensure that pathways are adequately lit to provide visibility during shorter daylight hours.
- 7. Wildlife Considerations** If wildlife is an issue, consider providing feeding stations away from the graves to divert animals from the area. Look to utilize natural barriers or plantings to protect graves from wildlife disturbances. Please check with the PA Dept. of Natural Resources or the US Dept. of the Interior for more information about animal management.
- 8. Regular Inspections** Conduct regular inspections of the cemetery grounds to identify any issues related to maintenance, safety, or aesthetics. Then maintain good records of any repairs or maintenance activities performed. Please check with our Information Management Supplier Members for more information about recordkeeping.
- 9. Community Engagement** While encouraging feedback from visitors to identify areas for improvement, ask them if they want to volunteer. Follow-up by organizing community days for winter clean-up or maintenance activities.
- 10. Planning for Spring** Prepare for spring maintenance by creating a plan for any repairs, landscaping, or restoration needed once the weather warms up. Ensure that all maintenance equipment is serviced and ready for use in the spring. Please check with our Supplier Members for more information about equipment maintenance.

By following these guidelines, cemeteries can maintain a respectful and serene environment throughout the winter months, ensuring that families can visit their loved ones safely and comfortably.

CEMETERY ANNUAL MAINTENANCE

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By Mike Hrvatin, Superintendent · Jefferson Memorial Cemetery & Funeral Home

Gear oil maintenance is extremely important to the longevity and lifespan of your cemetery equipment. Gear oil is a type of lubricant used to reduce friction and wear between the gears of machinery and vehicles. It plays a critical role in increasing their lifespan and improving the efficiency of gear systems by preventing metal-to-metal contact, reducing heat and wear, and providing protection against rust and corrosion.

The properties of gear oil, such as its viscosity, additives, and load-carrying capacity, determine its suitability for specific applications. Therefore, it is essential to choose the right gear oil for the specific gear system and its operating conditions. Regular maintenance of gear oil, including inspection of oil level and condition, and timely oil changes, is crucial to ensuring optimal performance and avoiding costly repairs.

Gear oil also helps to dissipate heat generated during operation and prevent corrosion, rust, and other forms of degradation. This type of lubricant is typically thicker than other lubricants, such as motor oil, and contains specialized additives to enhance its performance. Engine oil protects against wear and heat in engines, while gear oil provides lubrication and protects against high pressure and shock loads in gearboxes. Understanding the difference between these oils is crucial for maintaining optimal performance and longevity of automotive components.

When it comes to temperature tolerance, engine oil and gear oil have different properties. Engine oil is designed to withstand high temperatures, typically up to 250°F, without breaking down. Gear oil, on the other hand, is formulated to handle even higher temperatures, often up to 300°F or more. This is because the gears in a transmission can generate a lot of heat due to friction, and gear oil needs to be able to withstand this heat to keep the transmission running smoothly. Viscosity is an important parameter to consider when selecting gear oil. There are various grades, and the key is to select the appropriate viscosity grade. First and foremost, *learn about the manufacturer's requirements*, which can be found in the operating manual or on the manufacturer's website. There are several viscosity grades available, and the choice is also determined by the operating conditions.

SAE stands for the Society of Automotive Engineers. The SAE classification system is a way of defining how thin or how thick an oil is - an oil's viscosity. The classifications are listed here in order of increasing thickness: SAE 75W, SAE 80W, SAE 85W, SAE 90, SAE 140, SAE 250. What does EP mean? EP means extreme pressure and refers to the additive used in gear oils. This additive is designed to stop metal-to-metal contact taking place between transmission components. The EP additives are usually based on Sulphur and Phosphorous. These elements bond to the metal surfaces where there are points of extreme pressure and temperature, forming a sacrificial chemical layer. The Sulphur gives gear oils their characteristic smell.

As a final note, be sure not to put motor oil in gear oil, and visa versa! Jefferson Memorial Cemetery has a full-time mechanic on staff. We are happy to answer your cemetery maintenance questions.

Truist's dedicated Funeral and Cemetery Trust Services team is proud to support PCCFA.

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SUPPORT YOUR FELLOW CEMETERY IN A FIGHT FOR RIGHTS

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➤➤➤ BLAIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS PROPOSED EMINENT DOMAIN SEIZURE OF CEMETERY GROUNDS FOR PRISON COMPLEX

The Blair County Board of Commissioners advertised their intent to seize over 70 acres of Alto-Reste Park's cemetery property through eminent domain for the construction of a new county prison. This could force the cemetery to close permanently in the near future without access to their land meant to serve as a burial park for generations to come. This decision has sparked significant concern and opposition from the community and our industry across the state.

The proposed prison would be visible from most of the burial grounds, greatly compromising the peaceful and dignified environment that cemeteries strive to maintain. How will a cemetery survive without its land to honor the countless lives it memorializes? As we all know, land is an essential part of their heritage and their ability to serve families in perpetuity.

A crucial meeting regarding this land seizure was held on March 27th. The Commissioners decided to table the vote until April 3, 2025. Updates will be ongoing from the [Alto-Reste website](#). Your voice matters in preserving the sanctity and dignity of our final resting places.

HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT ALTO-RESTE?

Visit their [website here](#) to read about the proposed prison project, sign the petition, and voice your opinions to PA representatives to protect cemeteries across the state and nationwide.



ONLINE MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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PCCFA members can now renew their membership instantly online! For all new members, once your application is 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.

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