

»»» NEWSLETTER «««

SPRING 2026

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

PCCFA

KEY NEWS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello to all!

As we begin getting ready for our "Super Bowl" (Memorial Day), rest assured that your executive team at PCCFA is working behind the scenes, making our Association the BEST it can be.

We have recently opened up a poll regarding the wants, needs and desires of our members, through an online survey you will find on the next page.

The results so far are somewhat surprising, and extremely helpful to us. These results will allow us to shape upcoming meetings and seminars, based upon YOUR input.

In June, our executive board will meet to discuss future plans, meetings, and seminars for the next 12-24 months. This will enable our members to save the dates for these important meetings, making it easier for your planned attendance.

The absolute best way to get the absolute most out of your membership is by attending our future meetings. I feel quite confident that we will be able to put together a dynamic, interesting, and relevant series of conferences that will enable you and this organization to flourish. I encourage everyone to attend our Fall meeting, with details to follow.

So, as we approach our "Super Bowl", I wish everyone rain-free days and good luck completing the tasks needed to make your location the best it can be! We look forward to seeing you in the later this year.

Paul Simms
President

YOUR VOICE MATTERS

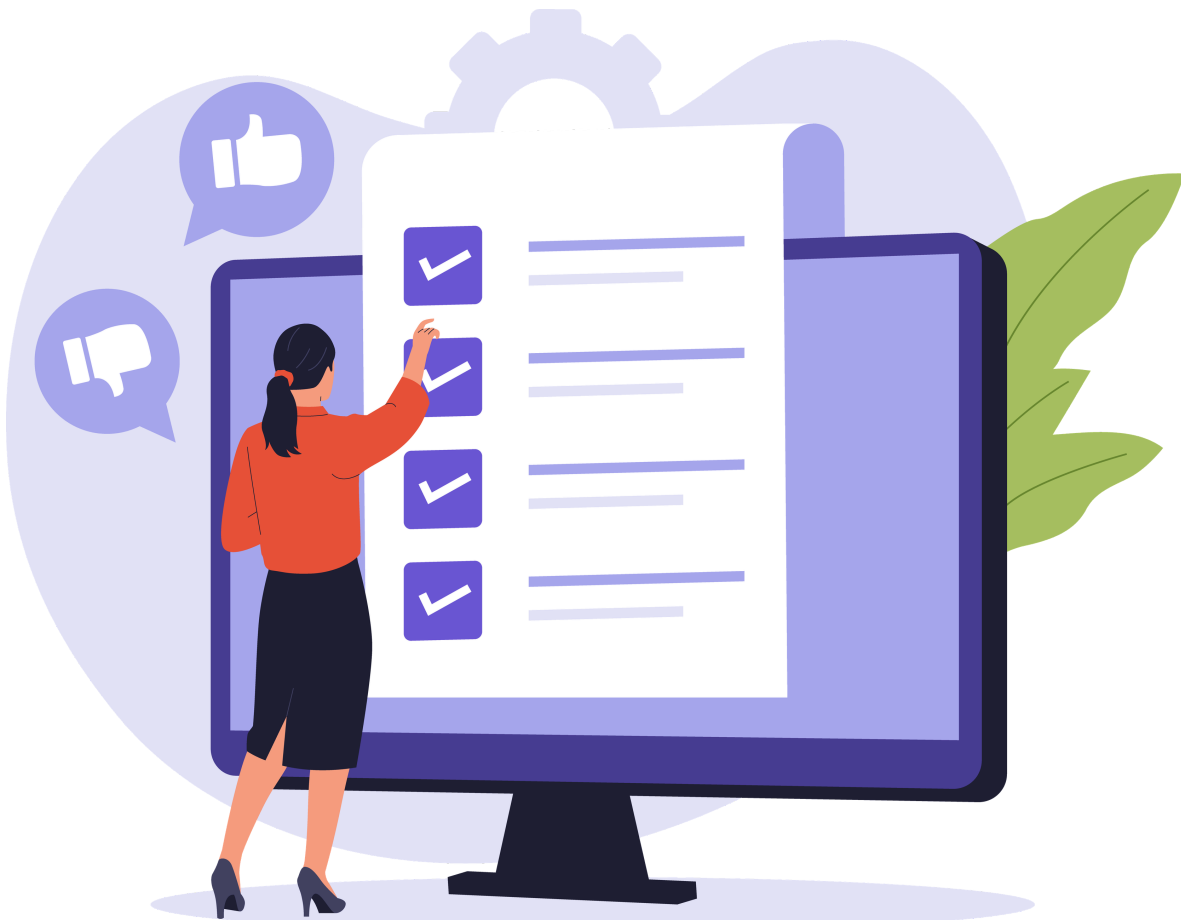
By Nancy Goldenberg, Secretary

Emerging decades ago from organizations deeply rooted in the death care industry, the Pennsylvania Cemetery Cremation & Funeral Association (PCCFA) was established to provide exceptional education, networking and legislative guidance to industry professionals throughout the Commonwealth.

Your PCCFA Board recognizes that today's world is rapidly changing – and so is our industry. We are more committed than ever to providing our members with relevant and meaningful services. To that end, please help by telling us what is important to you.

Take a few minutes to reflect and respond to this short survey. We respect your honesty and confidentiality. It is vitally important to hear from you, our membership, as to what direction you feel is most important and to what guidance you wish to seek most from our organization.

Please complete our survey and help us hear what matters most to you. A few minutes of your time can make a real difference.



[PCCFA Member Survey](#)

LEGISLATIVE NEWS & UPDATES

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Kenneth J. McDermott, Saxton & Stump

A new amendment to the Pennsylvania Liquor Code will make it easier for bars, restaurants, and taverns to serve alcohol at off-premises catering events for “end-of-life” ceremonies.

An antiquated provision of Pennsylvania law required Pennsylvania liquor license holders who hold off-premises catering permits to notify the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board 14 days in advance of any off-site event at which they would serve alcohol, and to notify local police and the Pennsylvania State Police’s Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement seven days before the event.

While that may make sense for most events planned weeks and months in advance, it failed to account for events that are planned at short notice, such as a funeral.

Gov. Josh Shapiro signed [House Bill 467](#), now Act 56, in December, giving liquor license holders with an off-premises catering permit a shorter window of 24 hours of advanced notice to the PLCB, BLCE, and local police for an “end-of-life” event. The law defines end-of-life events as “a gathering of people where guests honor a person who died within the previous seven days.” Establishments can register those types of events on the PLCB’s online regulatory system, [PLCB+](#), under “Other License Changes/Amendments,” and the amendment called “End-of-Life Memorial Event.”

If an end-of-life event is more than seven days away, the PLCB said in recent guidance that those events should be registered under the previous regulations.

The Pennsylvania Licensed Beverage and Tavern Association championed the amendment for a year after it learned about the issue.

“We’re happy our Association could address this outdated liquor code with some common sense through legislative channels, helping small business taverns, bars, and licensed restaurants, as well as Pennsylvania families wishing to remember the life of a loved one,” the association said in a late-December statement.

The bill also included provisions on liquor license auctions, a new “sporting event permit,” and more. If you have any questions about the new provisions in Act 56 or how to submit registration for an end-of-life event, please [contact me](#) or any member of the [Saxton & Stump Liquor Licensing and Alcohol Group](#).

**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 Paul Simms at (412) 614-0736 or e-mail pccfa.exec.team@gmail.com



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Follow along for more information on events, news, happenings, tips, stories and more.
Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/pccfaAssoc/](https://www.facebook.com/pccfaAssoc/).

MEMORIAL DAY & AMERICA250 CELEBRATIONS

By Dagny Neel Fitzpatrick, Past President

Memorial Day is one of the most meaningful and high-traffic times of year for cemeteries. With the added significance of the America250 commemoration, this year presents a unique opportunity to deepen community connection and historical reflection by incorporating this historic celebration into your events. Here are ten key focus areas:

1. Grounds Preparation. Ensure the cemetery is clean, manicured, and visually welcoming ahead of increased visitation. Mow lawns, edge walkways, remove debris, and clean headstones/memorials where appropriate to present a well-maintained and respectful environment like your veteran section. Think outside the box. Could your office windows do with a good cleaning ahead of increased foot traffic and location requests?

2. Flag Placement & Veteran Recognition. Place American flags on veterans' graves in accordance with local or national guidelines. For America250, consider expanding recognition efforts with enhanced veteran sections, historical markers, or storytelling elements that highlight service across generations.

3. America250 Integration. Memorial Day is more than a ceremony, it's part of a historic national milestone. Whether you annually host a program or not, consider coordinating speakers, clergy, military honors, and musicians like your local high school/middle school choirs, while incorporating America250 themes such as:

- Honoring local veterans connected to key moments in U.S. history
- Partnering with historical societies for educational components
- Incorporating patriotic readings, timelines, or exhibits

4. Parking & Traffic Flow. Prepare for significantly increased traffic, especially with heightened attendance tied to the holiday and America250 interest. Establish clear entry and exit points, designate parking areas, and consider staff or volunteers to direct vehicles safely and efficiently, add yard signs for easy directions to travelers, etc.

5. Visitor Amenities. Provide seating, shade (tents or canopies), and water stations where possible. For larger gatherings, consider expanding amenities to accommodate longer stays and broader community participation. Maybe consider asking coffee trucks to park on-site so visitors have food/drink options that do not rely on your staff, but both bring crowds and encourage visitors to stay a little longer on your grounds.

6. Safety & Accessibility. Inspect pathways, roads, and high-traffic areas for hazards. Clearly mark any restricted or uneven areas. Add signage such as 'no parking on grass' to avoid unnecessary maintenance post-event. Increased attendance makes proactive safety planning even more critical.

7. Signage & Communication. Use clear signage to guide visitors to event locations, parking, restrooms, and veteran sections. Promote your Memorial Day and America250 activities in advance via your website, social media, email newsletters, and local community boards to maximize awareness and turnout.

8. Volunteer & Community Engagement. Memorial Day during America250 is an ideal opportunity to deepen community involvement. Engage local organizations, schools, scout groups, and veterans' associations for:

- Flag placement
- Event participation
- Educational or historical programming to build lasting relationships beyond a single event.

9. Staffing & Operations. Ensure adequate staffing across all areas, including grounds, administration, and event coordination. Assign clear roles for crowd management, visitor assistance, and real-time maintenance needs throughout the day like on-demand service requests. Usually, a handful of staff can facilitate these roles and provide immediate visitor satisfaction.

10. Post-Event Follow-Up & Legacy Planning. Plan for timely cleanup, including flag removal and resetting the grounds. Following the event, evaluate what worked well and identify opportunities to expand future programming. Consider capturing photos, videos, and community feedback to use in future marketing and historical archives. By incorporating America250 into Memorial Day planning, cemeteries can elevate their role as not only places of remembrance, but also as community anchors for reflection, education, and national pride – creating a more meaningful and memorable experience for all who visit.

CONSUMER RELATIONS

By Harry C. Neel, Consumer Complaint Committee

It might be of interest to our members just how much PCCFA does for the profession at large across our state, and across the nation. On a weekly basis, we receive inquiries for general information and consumer complaints by phone or website inquiry. Most outreach to PCCFA is not complaints but requests for guidance, clarity, and support. Each interaction reflects the growing need for trusted, statewide leadership. Some inquiries as you may imagine revolve around similar topical issues - the grass is not cut, indignity surrounding transfer fees or other issues that we all deal with in our own cemeteries. However, we also get legitimate concerns around abandonment, safety of access issues, and more.

Below you'll find the number of consumer complaints dealt with on behalf of both member and non-member cemeteries last year. Each complaint requires timely response, investigation, and communication in resolving the issue; often, there is no resolve possible. When a church or municipal cemetery is simply no longer able to operate outside of facilitating a 1-2 burials a year, the message is often not one many consumers want to hear. There is not state or federal funding. You need volunteers to come together and help manage, maintain, or steer the future direction of the cemetery grounds.

The immense amount of time taken out of our weekly work schedule to handle these issues as they arise is no small number. But in the digital world we live in where bad actor's actions go viral, this service is one that is vitally important to combat the negative perception many feel about funeral and cemetery operations, especially when they have to take time to find and contact PCCFA after feeling like their local cemetery management will not help. These individuals may be greatly exaggerating a claim - often to the point of lying - or, they may have a very legitimate concern.

Through October 2025:

A total of 96 items were handled by the Consumer Service Committee. Of these, 73 (75%) were inquiries for information and 23 (24%) were complaints. Only about 7% of inquiries were funeral home related versus 64% cemetery related.

This committee may be the most important PR service PCCFA offers. I ask that you evaluate all that PCCFA does in the background that you may not be aware of. And ask yourself: who is advocating for your cemetery when issues arise beyond your control? Who is fielding calls, responding to concerns, and working to protect the reputation of our profession as a whole?

This work is often unseen, but it is constant, necessary, and increasingly important in a world where perception can spread faster than truth. PCCFA exists not only to support you, but to help ensure that the collective voice and integrity of Pennsylvania's cemeteries remain strong, credible, and respected.

YOUR MEMBERSHIP PORTAL

PCCFA members can update and 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. **Please take a moment and login and keep your contact information up-to-date with phone, email, and company address!**

➤➤➤ BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- The KeyNews, a quarterly publication, delivered by e-mail and post.
- 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 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, litigation, invasive species, cremation, etc.

ADVERTISE IN THE KEYNEWS

Do you want to reach the decision-makers? As a valued provider of merchandise or services to the Pennsylvania death care industry, utilize the Key News to reach your audience!

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