

79TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION BEGINS

The brand new 2009 year brings new beginnings and with those new beginnings a new West Virginia Legislative session. The 79th West Virginia Legislative Session began Wednesday, January 14, 2009 at the West Virginia State Capitol and will be in recess until February 11, 2009. The 79th Legislative Session will run from February 11, 2009 and will end April 11, 2009.

The West Virginia Cemetery and Funeral Association has overcome many challenges throughout the years of serving in the state of West Virginia and continues to provide quality service to its members. Our Association has been successful over the years to accomplish many things in our state due to the support of each of our members. It is important this support continues in the 2009 Legislative session.

Legislators value meaningful input from their constituents. Constituent input is very important in the legislative process and in improving the quality of government. In addition, legislators receive good ideas for legislation from constituents, as well as find flaws in proposed legislation from their constituents along with suggestions for improving the legislation.

The WVCFA foresees challenges in the near future which may impact our businesses. We must be prepared to discuss issues with our legislative leaders and actively participate in the legislative process as decisions are made during the 2009 Legislative session. The areas of interest include: West Virginia Public Service Commission, Cremation, Funeral Planning Agents, and Decreased Profit Margins.

We encourage you to follow the legislative information you receive. Notify your Government Relation contacts, Nelson Robinson or Chad Robinson, with your concerns and interests, and be prepared to contact your state representatives.

You will find some valuable tips regarding contacting Public Officials. Take a few moments to read The Golden Rules of contacts with Public Officials on page 2 of this newsletter.



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GOLDEN RULES FOR WORKING WITH PUBLIC OFFICIALS

1. **DON'T UNDERESTIMATE PUBLIC OFFICIALS.** With very rare exceptions, they are honest, intelligent and want to do the right thing. Your job is to inform them what you think is right.
2. **BE UNDERSTANDING.** Put yourself in the public official's place. Try to understand their problems, outlook and aims. Then you are more likely to persuade them to do the same in understanding your position.
3. **BE FRIENDLY.** Don't contact public officials only when you want their help. Invite them to be guests at meetings. Take pains to keep in touch with them throughout the year - every year.
4. **BE THOUGHTFUL.** Don't hesitate sending a note commending your legislator. Any public official will tell you they get dozens of letters asking them to do something, but very few thanking them for what they have done.
5. **BE REALISTIC.** Remember controversial legislation and regulation usually result in compromise. It has always been so and it always be so in a democracy.
6. **BE PRACTICAL.** Recognize each legislator has commitments and a certain amount of vote-trading goes on in the give-and-take of the legislative process. Try not to chastise a legislator who normally supports you if he happens to vote against one of your bills.
This doesn't necessarily mean he has deserted your whole program. Give a legislator the benefit of the doubt and they will appreciate it and remember that you did.
7. **BE A GOOD OPPONENT.** Fight issues - not people. Be ready with alternatives or solutions as well as with criticisms. This is constructive opposition.
8. **BE INFORMED.** Never meet with legislators to advocate a position without first studying the facts and the arguments pro and con. The mere fact you want a legislator to adopt one position or another won't be enough to convince them. Do your homework. Remember while some votes may be firmly committed, there will be many others that can be swayed on the basis of sound arguments that are properly presented.
9. **DON'T BREAK A PROMISE.** This is a cardinal rule. If you tell legislator you will do something, stick to the bargain.
10. **DON'T CHANGE HORSES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREAM.** Never leave a legislator stranded out on a limb by changing your position after they have publicly stated a position that you have urged them to take.
11. **BE REASONABLE. LEARN TO EVALUATE AND WEIGH ISSUES.** Many bills which are tossed into the hopper "by request" are never intended to become law. Try not to criticize legislators for bills which are introduced. Don't call out the army until you are sure a bill is serious.

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2009 Membership Drive

The West Virginia Cemetery and Funeral Association (WVCFA) is proud of its rich heritage which has existed for the past 58 years. This organization has been pioneers in the cemetery and pre-need sales arena.

Our current membership consists of 74 cemeteries, funeral homes and 25 registered vendors who work hard offering their support to the WVCFA. The members of our organization are dedicated to protecting our businesses and profession. The ability to continue to provide these services depends on an organization's membership and the number of members you have to do the job.

The 2009 WVCFA mission is to increase membership and bring more people into our association to reap the many benefits we have to offer. To achieve this goal it will take the efforts of all WVCFA members.

Members of the WVCFA enjoy benefits they can not receive on their own, without a high cost. Our charter allows us to not only represent the cemetery industry, but also the funeral and monument industries as well. We feel future regulations and market changes will affect all parts of our businesses. Now is the time we need to unite and form an association which can handle all issues which impact our profession.

Some of the benefits WVCFA offers:

- Assistance in all areas of cemetery and funeral operations
- Linked with Southern Cemetery Association and International Cemetery and Funeral Association
- Annual Convention
- Discounts and benefits from major companies
- Partnered with Government Relations Specialists who represent WVCFA in the legislative branch of our state government
- Resources providing all state laws, rules and regulations which govern our membership
- Weekly legislative updates during the legislative session of bills impacting our industry
- Guidance, assistance, and resources in connection with legal issues
- Officers and board of directors consist of proven professionals that are dedicated to making our businesses a greater success

We invite you to contact others in our profession who are not members of WVCFA and encourage them to join our association. It is important to make a concentrated effort to increase our membership today.

Be an active participant in our 2009 Membership Drive. Please share your knowledge and the benefits you have received from being a member of WVCFA. Together, we can increase our membership and prepare for our futures.

Applications can be obtained by contacting Lajzana Aldridge at (304) 752-7225 or online at www.wvcfa.net.

WV Board of Funeral Service Examiners

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YOUR ADVERTISEMENT HERE

The WVCFA Pinnacle will be mailing a quarterly newsletter. Reach out to all members of the WVCFA by advertising in the Pinnacle. Quarterly and yearly advertising rates are available

3" x 2" (Business Card Size)	4"x6"(Half Page)
Quarterly- \$150	Quarterly- \$225
Yearly - \$495	Yearly - \$695

8" x 10" (Full Page)
Quarterly- \$ 300
Yearly - \$1095

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Website Advertisement available...

NEW CEMETERY COULD TAKE 600 VETERANS A YEAR

Preliminary design work is underway on what will eventually become West Virginia's first West Virginia Veterans Cemetery.

"We've done some preliminary drillings. Everything looks okay. We're doing some surveys so we can get the property transferred to us," said state Veterans Affairs Director Keith Gwinn.

The agency has also hired Blackwood Associates of Fairmont and the L.A. Group to help with design and preliminary site work of the new facility. The L.A. Group has designed 28 veterans' cemeteries across the country.

Plans call for the cemetery to be on a 300-acre plot behind the State Police Academy in Institute, Kanawha County. The designs will allow for a marker and flag to be visible from I-64 to mark the location where thousands of West Virginia vets are expected to have their final resting place.

"Right now the projection is for about 600 burials a year," said Gwinn.

The VA requires the design to be in five phases. One phase will plan for every ten years. The first phase of the West Virginia cemetery would create plots for up to 6,000 gravesites.

West Virginia's high number of aging veterans is expected to fill the cemetery quickly. The requirements allow for any honorably discharged veteran to be buried there at no cost. The VA will pay the funeral expenses and erect the marker. Any spouse or children to be buried near loved ones would have to pay \$300 for the spot.

"We still have some more drillings to do and we have several archeological studies underway," said Gwinn. "We just want to make sure we have all our ducks in a row before we start announcing time frames."
(Staff, Institute, 11-10-08)

WVCFA Annual Convention was held August 7 - 9, 2008 at the Mountaineer Casino Racetrack and Resort, Chester, WV.

A highlight of every year is the WVCFA Annual Convention and 2008 was no exception. This is always a wonderful event to see each other and discuss issues of our profession, and enjoy spending time together.

The annual dinner and auction always provide a lot of fun and some interesting items offered up for sale. What a good time spent competing for the special items.

Mark your calendars now for the WVCFA 2009 Annual Convention which will be hosted at the Embassy Suites, Charleston WV on August 13 - 15, 2009. We are looking forward to new events being planned for the 2009 Convention! Plan Now to attend! Don't miss the fun!

2009 ICCFA CONVENTION & EXPO

APRIL 20-23, 2009

MANDALAY BAY RESORT

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

The current economic downturn has hit Las Vegas, and many hotels are reducing room rates.

As a result, the ICCFA has negotiated a 40% discount on hotel rooms at the Mandalay Bay Resort for attendees of the 2009 ICCFA Convention & Expo on April 20-23, 2009. After February 28th, the room rate will return to \$259.

The 2009 ICCFA Expo will be the largest ever, with more than 200 booths already pre-sold to a wide range of supplier companies. The ICCFA show is known as the friendliest and most productive in the industry, with no competing activities during Expo hours and free food and drink throughout the show.

“Join the Evolution” convention in Las Vegas, a convention with a value proposition like none other. Plan to learn not only what works, but how to see the lay of the land so you can properly orient and re-position your company. For more information, www.iccfaconvention.com.

Wide World of Sales Conference

Hilton New Orleans Riverside

January 13-15, 2010

2009 ICCFAU Scholarship Deadlines Quickly Approaching

The ICCFA Educational Foundation has announced its second annual Scholarship Award to the 2009 ICCFA University. The scholarship is in the amount of \$1,500.00 and can be used to pay the registration fee, lodging and travel expenses related to attending the University Program. The Foundation is a tax-exempt charity that supports the association's educational programs. Applicants for the scholarship must be ICCFA members in good standing and employed in the cemetery, cremation and funeral profession for a minimum of two years. Deadline for submission is February 28, 2009. Visit the ICCFA website for more information.

Classified:

If you are looking for associates, office personnel, salespersons let us know. Do you have equipment for sale or business for sale? Contact us we can get it in the next edition of *The Pinnacle*.

Recipe Corner

**Have a recipe you would like to share?
Let me know.....**

Warm up with Potato and Ham Soup

Simmer onion, celery, carrots and potatoes in water until tender. Add half & half to consistency. Can use fat-free, or can use the heavy whipping cream.

Season with Thyme, salt (sea salt or seasoning salt like Accent) and pepper

As soup thickens, add cut up pieces of ham and simmer until the soup thickens. If necessary, add a thickening sauce of flour and water (1 tablespoon to 1 tablespoon) if a thicker soup desired.

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*Please Visit Our Website
www.wvcfa.net*

**WVCFA Annual Convention
Embassy Suites, Charleston WV
August 13, 14, and 15, 2009
MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

WEBSITES OF INTEREST

www.iccfa.org
www.wvfuneralbd.com
www.wvfda.org
www.legis.state.wv.us
www.wvculture.org

2009 State Holiday Calendar

January 1 - New Year's Eve
January 19 - Martin Luther King's Birthday
February 16 - President's Day
May 25 - Memorial Day
June 19 - West Virginia Day
July 3 - Independence Day
September 7 - Labor Day
October 12 - Columbus Day
November 11 - Veterans Day
November 26 & 27 - Thanksgiving Day
December 24 - Christmas Eve (1/2 Day)
December 25 - Christmas Day

Please email any and all information that you would like to share with other members to Vickie Lively at vickie@wvcsi.com for publication in the *Pinnacle*.