

Local Events

OFDA Events

District Dinner Meeting
October 21st
Seven Feathers Casino Resort
Canyonville

District Dinner Meeting
November 18th
Spirit Mountain Casino Resort
Grand Ronde

District Dinner Meeting
January 13, 2026
Mt Hood Community College
Gresham

District Dinner Meeting
March 3, 2026
Wildhorse Casino Resort
Pendleton

2026 Convention
April 27-29th
The Graduate Hotel
Eugene, Oregon

Oregon Mortuary & Cemetery Board Meetings

2025 Meeting Dates
Tuesday, October 14th

Please note:
Meetings will typically be held at the
Portland State Office Building (PSOB).
For official location information,
contact the OMCB at 971.673.1500

Funeral Service Practitioner Exam Schedule

The FSP Exam can now be taken at any Pearson
Vue Testing Center. The Oregon testing locations
are in Beaverton, Medford, Portland and Salem. If
you are eligible and interested in taking the exam,
please contact Ryan Christopher via email
(Ryan.Christopher@omcb.oregon.gov)

National Events

October 2025

October 21-23rd
ICCFA
Leadership Summit
Knoxville, TN

October 26-29th
NFDA
International Convention & Expo
Chicago, IL

January 2026

January 13-15th
ICCFA
DEAD Talks
Las Vegas, NV

April 2026

April 15-17th
NFDA
Advocacy Summit
Washington DC

April 29-May 2nd
ICCFA
The ICCFA Experience
Fort Worth, TX

For more information on these events, visit:
www.nfda.org
www.iccfa.com

Features

- 2 President’s Letter
Executive Director’s Letter
- 3 2025-26 OFDA Meetings & Events
- 5 Meet The Team Of The OVERS
Help Desk
- 6 Employees Posting Personal
Opinions On Social Media -
What Can Employers Act Upon?
- 7 Are You Aware Of Incorrectly Denied
Veteran Burial Transportation Benefits?
- 8 Government Shutdown:
Impact on VA Services
- 10 FPG Under New Ownership;
Announces Plan For Growth
- 12-13 House Bill 3127 Requirement
To Complete Death Records
Electronically, Effective Jan. 2026



The Communicator
September/October 2025

Coming Soon: New Phone Number For
the OVERS Help Desk

Reprinted from an OHA Press Release, Sept 2025

The OVERS Help Desk phone number will be changing to 971.673.1190, Option 1 for English, followed by Option 4. This change is part of a modernization initiative aimed at providing better customer service, improving our ability to track and measure service through analytics, and supporting more flexible work solutions. We expect this change to go live during the month of October.

To ensure a smooth transition, the current number, 971.673.0279, will remain available for a period of time as we implement this important update.



Published bi-monthly
by the
Oregon Funeral
Directors Association
12725 SW 66th Ave.
Suite 103
Portland OR 97223
503.639.1186

Portions of this newsletter
are taken from other
sources and may not
represent all available data
or be complete statements.
An attorney or accountant
should be consulted on any
legal or tax matters.
Conclusions are based on
our best analysis of
industry information
sources.

OFDA Officers

President
Angela McKenzie-Tucker
Portland

Vice President
Elizabeth Johnson
Salem

Secretary/Treasurer
Travis Sandusky
Klamath Falls

Business Admin. Chair
Holly Houston
St. Helens

Board of Directors

Jessica Daaling
Portland

Joe Sharps
Eugene

Joshua Voyles
Portland

Jim Jackson
Gresham

Executive Director
Wally Ordeman

President’s Letter

Autumn is always my favorite time of year; the cool weather, football, and Halloween are all major highlights for me. As I write this article, I have just finished reconciling my calendar for the rest of the year, and I am in a bit of a daze with all the things on my agenda.

Fall can be an important yearly milestone for many of our funeral homes. It is typically when we see our schedules get busier and an increase in call volume. Holiday stress is just around the corner, and for our business operators, the focus on end-of-year profitability is starting to come into focus.

If you are feeling the end-of-year squeeze, I hope you find ways to take care of yourself. Many members of the OFDA are key members of their communities. They are tasked with providing round-the-clock emotional support to friends and neighbors, while working unpredictable and long hours to ensure everything comes together. Burnout has become a significant issue in our business and a topic that warrants greater attention and concern.

The NFDA is promoting a stronger narrative about work-life balance, and I encourage you to visit the NFDA website to access new articles and information about stress in the lives of funeral directors. Sometimes, the greatest comfort in all of this is the understanding and validation that you are not alone in struggling with being overwhelmed and feeling like you are running on empty. Comradery at OFDA meetings and other events can be a valuable time to connect with others in similar roles and share these challenges, and maybe even share best practices for what to do when it feels like the weight of the world is on your shoulders.

I know I will manage my busy schedule, and I am greatly looking forward to all the OFDA events on my calendar. I'm rolling up my sleeves and plan to get several OFDA projects ready to go for 2026. Please feel free to reach out and contact me if you have any thoughts or ideas for OFDA.

Angela McKenzie-Tucker
503.333.3624
Angela.McKenzie@dignitymemorial.com

Wally Ordeman
Executive Director, OFDA & NFTS
541.979.8931
wally@ofda.org

The Communicator

Page 2

Executive Director’s Letter

Do you ever feel you’d like to have an opportunity to sit down with your regulatory authority in an atmosphere of respect, collaboration, and honesty? A place where you can help prioritize the goals of that authority and share your ideas face to face for the benefit of the industry? You have that opportunity!! November 18th will be an epic day for the death care industry in Oregon. For four hours in the afternoon the industry will sit down with the OMCB in a round table format to discuss several areas including the IDP, OMCB office functionality, legislation, and disaster preparedness. This is a rare opportunity with OFDA, OMCB, and interested parties to collaborate on future goals.

Please save November 18th at Spirit Mtn Casino for an afternoon of strategic planning! Your input is very very valuable! More information will be forthcoming and also please keep in mind that following the afternoon session we will have a social time, dinner, and a district meeting program. A full but productive day for sure!! Please keep an eye out for information from OFDA for registration and from the OMCB for the strategic planning agenda.

There is still time to register for the district meeting at Seven Feathers Casino in Canyonville October 21st. The evening program will feature active shooter training, as well as a first hand account of the events at Umpqua CC by your funeral director colleague (please see the previously sent announcement and RSVP to register). Future district meetings (in January and March) will be held at MHCC and in Pendleton, and of course convention will be held in late April in Eugene.

Completely switching gears, did you know OFDA has an ethics committee? If you find yourselves with a troublesome grieving family or a disagreement with a regulatory authority, please explore OFDA’s option of help from the ethics committee. This can be a great way to mitigate certain situations and keep them from escalating to full out complaints.

Your board continues to work hard on your behalf and looks forward to seeing you at meetings or hearing from you by phone or email. Please remember that your engagement with the association is what makes OFDA strong!

Wally Ordeman
Executive Director, OFDA & NFTS
541.979.8931
wally@ofda.org

Their final plans handled.
Your preneed trust managed.
Peace of mind for all.



We’re proud to now offer enhanced trust and preneed contract management services to you and your clients. The demand for preneed offerings is on the rise. National Funeral Trust Service (NFTS) is a Qualified Funeral Trust with proven investment returns and no 1099s that provides complete recordkeeping of all preneed contracts and much more.

• No account minimums and low management fees

• Pre-authorized debit payment

• Coupon books for multi-payment plans

• One time and/or recurring credit card payment setup

• 24/7 access to trust records

• Fast distribution of trust funds - often within one business day

NATIONAL FUNERAL
TRUST
SERVICE

POWERED BY FSI

Learn more

The Communicator

Page 19



Benefits Of Membership In The Oregon Funeral Directors Association

- An Organized Political Action Committee
- District Dinner Meetings Hosted By OFDA In Locations Throughout Oregon
 - Group Programs And Voting Privileges (Full Firm FH Members Only)
 - OFDA's Resume And Background Check Service
 - Online Newsletter & Email Updates
 - Participation and/or Exhibition At The Annual Convention
- Partnership With Human Resources Firm HR Answers At Discounted Rate
 - Public Relations And Advocacy For The Funeral Industry In Oregon
- Sponsorship And Monitoring Of Legislation Relevant To The Industry And The Public
- Sponsorship Of A Mortuary Science Student Scholarship At Mt. Hood Community College
 - Use Of The Ethics Committee For Mediation Purposes
 - Preferred Partner Program

OFDA 25/26

Meeting Schedule



Southern

Seven Feathers Casino
Canyonville

October
21

November
18

Coastal

Spirit Mountain Casino
Grand Ronde

Portland Metro

Mt. Hood Community College
Gresham

January
13

March
03

Eastern

Wildhorse Casino
Pendleton

2026 OFDA CONVENTION
APRIL 27-29
THE GRADUATE HOTEL IN EUGENE

Funeral Service Foundation Surpasses \$1 Million In Academic Scholarships Awarded

Reprinted from NFDA.org

This spring, thanks to the generosity of its donors, the Funeral Service Foundation awarded 32 academic scholarships totaling \$92,500 to students across the United States and Canada. This scholarship cycle marked a momentous milestone: The Foundation now has awarded more than \$1 million in academic scholarships since the program’s inception in 2002.

“Donating more than \$1 million to such an important cause - the future of the profession - is at the heart of the Foundation’s mission,” said John Heald, chair of the Funeral Service Foundation. “Investing in funeral service students who will strengthen and shape the profession has been incredibly meaningful to the Foundation and it’s supporters.”

Since awarding its first academic scholarship, the Joseph E. Hagan Memorial Scholarship, in 2002, the Foundation has established additional scholarships in memory of Shipley Rose Buckner, Mark Hornibrook and Harry Pontone, Steve Mack, Louis and Josephine Pontone, Dennis Schoepp, Todd Van Beck, Jack Springer (with CANA), and Edward J. Fitzgerald (with APFSP). The Foundation also has created scholarships in honor of John Carmon, Bob Horn, Steve Lang and Funeral Directors Life. The Memorial Classic Scholarships are supported by proceeds from the annual Tom Johnson Memorial Classic golf tournament. Moreover, the Foundation ‘45 Scholarships honor the Foundation’s inaugural year, 1945. The Foundation also promotes the Brenda Renee Horn and Steve Mack Memorial Scholarships in partnership with the SCI National Scholarship Program.

The Foundation’s academic scholarship program runs in two annual cycles - spring and fall. The next application window is September 15-November 1, 2025.

FSI

TRUST SOLUTIONS

AN ARGENT COMPANY

We are honored to be the administrator for
OFDA’s National Funeral Trust Service master trusts.

 (800) 749-1340

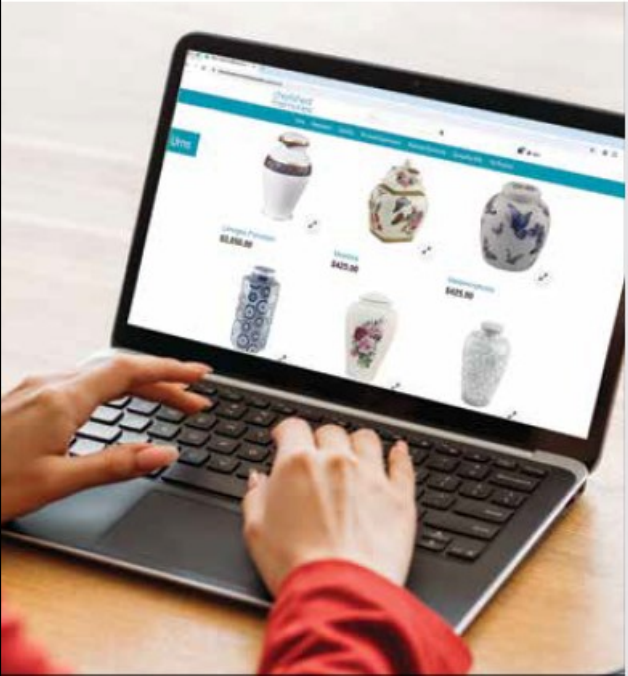
 www.FSItrust.com

 1700 Summit Lake Drive, Suite 100, Tallahassee, FL 32317



Experience the Matthews Aurora™

DIFFERENCE.



Conveniently capture more memorial product sales, anytime, anywhere.

What is the Matthews Aurora™ Difference?

We know capturing each product sale is crucial to your business - that’s why we developed the Cherished Memories™ Keepsakes online store. This free tool makes ordering Matthews Aurora urns, jewelry, and keepsakes through your funeral home easier than ever for families. Using a link customized to your business, families can browse and purchase products from the comfort of their home. We make the process seamless so you can help families memorialize their loved one weeks, months, even years after you’ve served them.

Discover Matthews Aurora™ Funeral Solutions.

Please contact us at 1.800.457.1111 to be connected with your Matthews Aurora Funeral Service Consultant.

MAFS-13395-2025 © 2025 Matthews International Corporation, all rights reserved. MATTHEWS® and MATTHEWS INTERNATIONAL® are registered trademarks of Matthews International Corporation.

The Communicator

Page 17



Robert Goff, CFSP
(509) 710-4517



Oregon Policy Numbers:
ICC152100U(04-2015), ICC152103U(04-2015), ICC152104U(04-2015), ICC152106U(04-2015), ICC152122(04-2015),
ICC152110U(04-2015), ICC152113U(04-2015), ICC152114U(04-2015), ICC152116U(04-2015), 2123U DAHR(07-2016)

NOT ALL PRODUCTS AVAILABLE IN ALL STATES

Policy Growth compounded and credited daily

Single Premium / Guaranteed issue

3, 5, 7, 10 and 15 Pay / Full Benefit

Pay-Up Option (same as cash)

Merchandise Protection Plan (any manufacturer)

Death Away from Home Benefit

On-line Applications & Claims

Funeral Home Portal for policy details and more

Call 800.657.6352
and let us help you with your
preneed insurance funding!
unitedheritagelife.com | Meridian, Idaho 83680

What The Federal Government Shutdown Means To Your Clients

Reprinted from a SSA Press Release., Oct 2025

Congress failed to reach an agreement on funding beginning October 1, 2025. As a result, the federal government is shut down until further notice. We recognize that your organization plays a critical role, and we want to provide you with information to help you guide the people you serve.

We want you to know that during the federal government shutdown, payments to all people who currently receive Social Security benefits and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) will continue with no change in payment dates. Your clients will still receive their payments on time.

To help manage their benefits and access important services, please encourage your clients to create an online my Social Security account at www.ssa.gov/myaccount/. With a personal my Social Security account, your clients can view benefit estimates, request a proof of income letter, apply for benefits, request a replacement Social Security card or Medicare card, and much more. It's easy, convenient, and secure.

Our local offices will remain open to the public but will provide reduced services. During this time, your clients can still:

- Apply for benefits
- Request an appeal
- Change their address or direct deposit information
- Report a death
- Verify or change their citizenship status
- Replace a lost or missing Social Security payment
- Obtain a critical payment
- Change a representative payee
- Make a change in their living arrangement or income (SSI recipients only)
- Obtain a new or replacement Social Security card

Hearings offices remain open to conduct hearings before an Administrative Law Judge (ALJ). Please be aware that we may not be able to assist with all in-person service requests at this time. For example, we cannot provide proof of benefits letters, or update or correct earnings records. These in-person services will resume when the federal government is operating normally.

When the shutdown ends, we will post updates on our official social media accounts. For more information on the government shutdown, visit www.ssa.gov/agency/shutdown.

Meet The Team of the OVERS Help Desk

Reprinted from an OVERS Press Release, Sept 2025



While their phone number will be changing, the OVERS Help Desk staff remain the same. Joanne and Juana will continue to provide the high-quality service many of you have experienced, only now as part of our main CHS phone tree system.



The #1 most common call to the Help Desk is to assist with password resets. You can also reset your own password - see the Quick Reference Guide on the OHA website for step-by-step instructions to reset your OVERS password.

Please contact CHS.PartnerServices@oha.oregon.gov if you have any questions about this transition to the new phone number.

Employees Posting Personal Opinions on Social Media: What Can Employers Act Upon?

Reprinted from NFDA.org

NFDA's *Endorsed Provider partner SESCO Management Consultants* has provided the following article for NFDA members.

As more and more employees use social media as major communication tools, employers must know what they can and can't do when it comes to disciplining or even terminating employees for their social media use. Employees going to social media to share their personal opinions on topics such as the assassination of Charlie Kirk has caused employers to consider where the "line" is as to how they can respond to protect the good name and reputation of their company.

Whether employees post, comment, or otherwise engage in social media activity, employers can generally act on such conduct as they would if it occurred in the workplace. But there are several protections that may be available to an employee facing discipline for their postings. These include laws prohibiting harassment and violence, laws protecting whistleblowers, and employees who complain about workplace conditions.

Legal Considerations

- Private-sector and most non-profit employers are not bound by the First Amendment's free speech protections, which only restrict government action.
- Several states – including California, Colorado, and New York – have statutes protecting employees from retaliation for lawful off-duty conduct. In addition, Connecticut, Louisiana, Minnesota, South Carolina, and Wyoming are among the states that specifically protect off-duty political activity. These laws may prevent employers from firing or disciplining employees for expressing their personal views unless those views have a clear, material impact on the business.
- Even without a directed state law, the federal National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) could also provide your employees with protection. If the social media use relates, even indirectly, to the employee's terms and conditions of employment, it may qualify as protected "concerted activity." This is especially true if the post touches on workplace issues shared by coworkers (e.g., wages, benefits, and working conditions as defined by the NLRA).

SESCO's Guidance on What Employers Should and Cannot Include in Social Media Policy

What not to include:

- Prohibitions on work-related discussions: Employees have a legal right to discuss jobs, wages, working conditions, and other employment issues.

- Restrictions on social connections: Avoid language that limits employees from "friending" or connecting with coworkers online.
- Requests for private social media credentials: Do not require employees to share their account passwords.
- Bans on pay or benefits discussions: Preventing these conversations can violate labor laws.
- Prohibitions on media contact: While employees have the right to speak to the media, you can require them to specify what they say as individuals, not company representatives.

What to include:

- Clear examples of unacceptable behavior: Specify that hate speech, discrimination, bullying, retaliation, threats of violence or condoning acts of violence on social media platforms will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- Provide practical, easy-to-understand rules that apply to employee behavior online:
- Respect company values: Encourage employees to align their online conduct with the company's values. Make sure the company's values are known to them.
- Update privacy settings: Employees must regularly review and update their social media privacy settings.
- Do not share internal information: Prohibit posting confidential business information, financial details, or sensitive customer information.
- Think before you post: Remind employees that posts can have personal and professional consequences.
- Comply with specific state laws.

NFDA's Endorsed Provider partner, SESCO Management Consultants offers free or discounted access to a wide variety of information and services including free, unlimited telephone and email consultations, an employee handbook development checklist, compliance recommendations and more!

For more information on NFDA's partnership with SESCO and the services they can provide, please visit [NFDA.org/EndorsedProviders](https://www.nfda.org/EndorsedProviders).



SCAN ME

On behalf of VisionGift, Cascade Life Alliance, and Solvita — thank you to our funeral home partners. We are deeply grateful for all you do.



America 250 Oregon Commission Launches Oregon 250 Grant Program

Reprinted from an Oregon Heritage Press Release

The America 250 Oregon Commission, in partnership with Oregon Heritage and the Oregon Historical Society, is excited to announce the [Oregon 250 Grant Program](#), supporting projects that commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. This grant program helps organizations create inclusive, community-focused projects that highlight Oregon’s diverse histories, traditions, and cultures.

Eligible organizations — including nonprofits, local governments, public schools, universities, colleges, and federally recognized tribes in Oregon — may apply for grants of up to \$5,000. Funding can support events, exhibitions, educational programming, collections development, research, and interpretation. Projects must align with the mission of America 250 Oregon and one or more of its seven guideposts, which are:

- To inspire Oregonians to participate in the work of forming a more perfect union.
- To highlight the importance of civics and history education in building a better future.
- To highlight the work of Oregon’s many history and heritage organizations.
- To encourage a robust, thorough, and honest examination of our collective history.
- To celebrate the unique traditions, arts, and cultures of communities throughout Oregon.
- To honor the service and sacrifice made by Oregon’s veterans.
- To celebrate the power of place through Oregon’s remarkable landscapes and scenic beauty.

A total of \$100,000 in funding is available, with 50% dedicated to rural communities. This funding was provided by the Oregon State Legislature to the Oregon Historical Society for the purpose of supporting the work of the America 250 Oregon Commission.

“We are grateful to the Oregon State Legislature for providing funds that will encourage Oregonians across our state to create opportunities to commemorate this once-in-a-generation moment in our nation’s history,” said Kerry Tymchuk, Chair of the America 250 Oregon Commission and Executive Director of the Oregon Historical Society.

Grants are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis to eligible projects, with two funding cycles:

- **Cycle 1:** September 15–November 1, 2025
- **Cycle 2:** January 1–March 1, 2026

The grant period runs through June 30, 2027, and applications are now being accepted.

More information about the *Oregon 250 Grant Program* can be found at [oregon250.org](#), including the grant guidelines and grant application.

Submit Your Event to the America 250 Oregon Community Calendar

The America 250 Oregon Commission invites individuals, organizations, and communities across the state to participate in our state’s official 250th commemoration by hosting events that reflect the diversity, creativity, and history of Oregon. Whether you’re planning a lecture, festival, exhibition, performance, community conversation, or something entirely unique — the commission wants to hear from you! To be featured on the America 250 Oregon community calendar, your event must align with at least one of the commission guideposts — the foundational values guiding our semi quincentennial commemoration effort in Oregon.

Fill out the Event Submission Form if you would like your event included on the America 250 Oregon community calendar. All submissions will be reviewed and could take up to 3 weeks for response. Please submit a separate form for each program, project, or event you plan to host. Approved events will receive the “America 250 Oregon Official Event” logo for inclusion on promotional materials.

America 250 Oregon Traveling Exhibitions

The America 250 Oregon Commission is currently offering two traveling exhibitions that are available to rent at no cost! *The Power of Place* highlights Oregon’s awe-inspiring landscapes, from its rugged coastline to its tranquil valleys and majestic peaks, many of which have remained unchanged for centuries.

The Pursuit of Happiness shifts the focus to the people and communities of Oregon and the way we gather to celebrate the diverse cultures that define our state.

Get Involved

If you or your organization is interested in getting involved with the America 250 Oregon commemoration, please contact oregon.250@ohs.org or sign up for the official America 250 Oregon email list.

About the America 250 Oregon Commission

The mission of the America 250 Oregon Commission is to coordinate, provide guidance, and ensure that Oregon’s official observance of the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States is inclusive and shares the histories of Oregon’s diverse populations, including the histories of the Indigenous peoples who have resided here since time immemorial. Learn more at [oregon250.org](#).

Are You Aware Of Incorrectly Denied Veteran Burial Transportation Benefits?

Reprinted from NFDA.org

NFDA has been made aware of significant issues related to the reimbursement of burial transportation benefits for veterans from January 2023 through March 2024. These problems stem from errors in the Veterans Benefits Administration’s (VBA) automated claims processing system.

Specifically, the system:

- Prematurely denied valid claims.
- Failed to reimburse transportation expenses even when supporting evidence was submitted.
- Did not notify claimants of decisions regarding transportation benefits.

As a result, it is estimated that:

- Approximately 1,300 claims were underpaid by a total of \$743,000.
- Around 4,700 claims were processed without proper notification to claimants.

The VBA processes claims for transportation reimbursement as follows.

Eligibility:

- Transportation reimbursement covers reasonable expenses incurred to transport a veteran’s remains from the place of death to the final resting place.
- Eligibility expanded under the “Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020,” which became effective January 5, 2023. It includes veterans who died while under VA care, were receiving compensation or pension at the time of death, or whose remains were unclaimed.

Required Evidence:

- VBA requires an itemized receipt or statement showing the name of the deceased veteran, the nature and cost of services and transportation, the name of the claimant, and the dates of services rendered.
- Statements or receipts do not need to show "paid in full," only that expenses were incurred.

If you have any questions or would like to share additional feedback on challenges you may encounter with transportation benefits, please contact Lesley Witter, Senior Vice President, Advocacy at LWitter@NFDA.org.

OGR Future Leaders Forum

Reprinted from NFDA.org

From August 25 to 27, the *International Order of the Golden Rule* (OGR) held its Future Leaders Forum at Karrer-Simpson Funeral Home, an affiliate location of Pollock-Randall Funeral Home in Port Huron, Michigan.

During this two-day program, young professionals, first- and second-career individuals, and emerging leaders explored visionary concepts and innovative strategies to help shape the funeral homes of the future.

With the theme of “Own the Future,” the program featured a range of sessions and activities, including: “Bridging the Generational Divide in the Workplace” with Antonio Green, James H. Cole Home for Funerals; “Making the Best Choice for Your Preneed” with Andy Weninger, Premier Preneed Marketing; “Building a Strong Foundation: Financial Insights from Independent Funeral Homes,” presented by Express Funeral Funding; “Star Trek and Vikings... at a Funeral? aka Dare to Use Your Imagination” with Joe E. Pray, Pray Funeral Home; and “The Power of Moments,” led by Matthew Van Drimmelen, Full-Circle Aftercare.

In other news, OGR elected new members to its Foundation Board for the 2025-26 term. Chris Miller, Thomas Miller Mortuary, Corona, California, was elected as chair; Jamie Wieting, Wieting Family Funeral Home, Chilton, Wisconsin, was elected as vice chair; and Roger Beyers, Beyers Funeral Home & Crematory, Leesburg, Florida, was reelected as secretary/treasurer.

New to the board are Chase Miller, Lewis Funeral Home, Milton, Florida; Peter Urban Jr., Anton B. Funeral Home, Ambler, Pennsylvania; and Justin Zabor, Zabor Funeral Home, Parma, Ohio.

They join continuing members William Brock, Vander Plaat Funeral Home of Wyckoff, Wyckoff, New Jersey; Laura Kendrick-Godwin, Pollock-Randall Funeral Home Inc., Port Huron, Michigan; Charles Castiglia, Lakeside Memorial Funeral Home, West Seneca, New York; Thomas Hemmerle, Barnett-Strother Funeral Home LLC, Madisonville, Kentucky; and Paul Hummel, Hummel Funeral Home & Crematories, Akron, Ohio. [OGR.org](#)

Wolfelt Authors New Book, Celebrates Center For Loss' 40th Anniversary

Reprinted from Center For Loss and Life Transition Press Release, Sept 2025

Grief educator Alan Wolfelt, Ph.D., has written a new book, *Creating Your Grief Plan: The Power of Understanding and Befriending the Six Universal Needs of Mourning*. The book is available in softcover and e-book formats through Companion Press and in bookstores.

The book describes the six universal needs of mourning and their role in the movement toward reconciling loss. Although these six needs are painful and difficult, their power is that they're also transformative over time. Awareness of these needs will help readers take a participative, action-oriented approach to healing in grief rather than a passive one. This book will empower readers to make a plan to convert their grief into active, authentic mourning.

In other news, the Center for Loss and Life Transition is celebrating 40 years of "helping people help others." Since its founding by Wolfelt in 1985, the Center for Loss and Life Transition has provided grief education to caregivers and counselors, offered workshops for the bereaved across North America, and published books and resources for those experiencing grief.

"It has been an honor to support many grieving children, teens, adults and families over the last 40 years," said Wolfelt. "It has also been a privilege to work with sponsors throughout North America and the world to bring grief-informed education to hundreds of communities."

Resources To Support Grieving Families During The Holidays

Reprinted from NFDA.org

The NFDA Store is your go-to source for professional tools, guides, and inspiration designed to support your work and strengthen the care you provide to families. This week, we're featuring three impactful titles to help support people grieving families during the upcoming holiday season:

- "Healing Your Holiday Grief: 100 Practical Ideas" by Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D.
- "Holiday Blues: A Self-Help Manual on Grief Through the Holidays" by Dr. Clarence Tucker
- "Thoughts for the Holidays: Finding Permission to Grieve" by Doug Manning

Informant Telephone Number On Death Certificates

Reprinted from an OVERS Press Release, Sept 2025

A common question we receive is "Why does the informant telephone number not appear on death certificates that are printed from OVERS?"

The number doesn't print because our death certificates are based on the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) template. That template is accepted as a national standard, and it includes a field for the informant's phone number. However, this is not a field that exists in OVERS. As a result, death certificates printed out of OVERS will instead have the informant's telephone number automatically filled with "Not Available."

23. Father's Name	James Doe
25. Informant's Name	Carla Doe
26. Telephone Number	Not Available
29. Place of Death	Decedent's Residence

We recognize this can result in confusion for families. We hope to address this issue in an upcoming update to OVERS or through a format change to the death record.

If you have any questions about the informant telephone number, please contact CHS.PartnerServices@oha.oregon.gov.

Government Shutdown: Impact On VA Services

Reprinted from NFDA.org

As you know, on October 1, the federal government "shut down." During the current lapse in funding, the vast majority of VA benefits and services will continue uninterrupted, but the government shutdown is not without consequences to VA. The following critical Veterans care and assistance programs **will be** impacted by the government shutdown:

- VA will not provide Veteran career counseling or transition assistance program activities.
- The GI Bill Hotline will be closed.
- VA regional benefits offices will be closed.
- VA will cease public affairs and outreach to Veterans.
- VA will not permanently place headstones or maintain the grounds at VA national cemeteries.
- VA will not process applications for pre-need burials.
- VA will not print new presidential memorial certificates.



Starting January 1, 2026, Oregon law requires death records to be completed in the state's electronic reporting system called **OVERS**. [Oregon Revised Statute 432.133(1)(a)]

Funeral directors will no longer have the option to print a paper record for medical certifiers.



OVERS is a secure web-based system that can be accessed using any browser.

To get an OVERS account, submit the following to Oregon Vital Records.

1. OVERS Enrollment form found at <http://bit.ly/OVERSSignup> -or-
 2. Two pieces of ID
- (See enrollment form for details on how to submit materials by fax or email.)



Visit the medical certifier page of the Vital Records website for helpful OVERS resources at:

<https://bit.ly/orvrMEDCERT> -or-

- Training videos on how to use OVERS*
- Cause of death training video and instructions
- Quick start guides and full user guides
- Information sheets on various causes of deaths
- Help guides for common tasks in OVERS
- Information on how to set up an employee at your office as your OVERS Facility Administrator who can assist medical certifiers, review records, look up user information, and reset passwords.



If you have questions about enrolling or using OVERS, setting up a Facility Administrator, or would like to schedule an individual or group training, email CHS.PartnerServices@oha.oregon.gov.

* Individual and group trainings for OVERS are also available.



Batesville Achieves First Halcyon Integration with Georgia EDRS

Reprinted from NFDA.org

Batesville has achieved the first interoperational integration of its Halcyon deathcare management software with Georgia’s Electronic Death Registration System (EDRS). The integration eliminates the need for duplicative manual-entry data. This not only improves processing speed but also helps funeral homes maintain more accurate death records and supports continued electronic death submissions in other states.

Said Sara Gard, general manager of Halcyon by Batesville:

“This breakthrough integration with Georgia improves business efficiencies and processes, as Georgia funeral home directors can now enter a decedent’s death certificate and information once and it will seamlessly integrate from Halcyon directly to the Georgia Vital Events Registration System. This saves the funeral home customer an average of 15 to 30 minutes per case.”

Batesville is a proud participant in a subgroup of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Vital Statistics System Modernization Community of Practice. The purpose of this subgroup is to research and review the modernization of electronic death-record submission, including improvements to funeral home death-record data collection and management. Together, the team developed, tested and implemented a system where funeral home management systems could exchange data electronically with a state’s death-registry system to improve the timeliness and quality of death data, create efficiencies for funeral directors, and accelerate adoption of vital records technology. [HalcyonDCMS.com](#)

NMD Launches Upgraded Fingerprint Scanner

Reprinted from the NFDA Director, Sept. 2025

The newly released smaller, more ergonomic fingerprint scanner from New Memorials Direct (NMD) makes it easier for funeral home staff and other providers to capture individuals’ fingerprints. With improved mobility and in-hand operation, the small design provides comfort and efficiency for users in various settings.

In addition, the upgraded scanner tablet is equipped with a more powerful operating system and modernized internal components. These enhancements significantly reduce scan times and improve overall device responsiveness. The improved fingerprint-capture experience ensures that every detail is preserved and supports the creation of high-quality, one-of-a-kind memorial keepsakes.

For more details, visit [newmemorialsdirect.com](#)

House Bill 3127 Requirement To Complete Death Records Electronically

Reprinted from an OVERS Press Release, August 2025

Dear Funeral Directors,

As many of you are already aware, the passage of House Bill 3127 requires that death records be registered electronically using OVERS. The effective date for the bill is January 1, 2026.

We are communicating with the Oregon Medical Association, Oregon Nurses Association and Oregon Society of Physician Associates to get their assistance in informing medical certifiers about the new law. We plan to communicate directly with medical certifiers who are currently not using OVERS and encourage them to begin using OVERS as soon as possible so they are comfortable with the system by the time the law goes into effect.

To help spread information about the passage of the bill and how medical certifiers can enroll in OVERS, we created a handout that can be given to certifiers that ask for a drop to paper record.

The attached handout (**See Page 13, facing page**) has a QR code that will open the OVERS enrollment form and one that will take them to a Vital Records webpage created specifically for medical certifiers. The webpage includes information about enrolling in OVERS, OVERS training videos, and helpful resources. The handout also includes our contact information for certifiers that have questions or would like to schedule a training. The handout can be printed or if you prefer you can order them from CHS by emailing CHS.Registration@oha.oregon.gov.

When ordering, include the handout title “HB 3127 Handout for Medical Certifiers” in the subject line, number of handouts you would like, and the name of your funeral home and mailing address.

We appreciate our partnership with you as we work to implement fully electronic death records.

If you have any questions about HB 3127 or how medical certifiers can get set up with OVERS, contact CHS.PartnerServices@oha.oregon.gov.

Sincerely,
Oregon Vital Records
Center for Health Statistics

How Can Succession Planning Benefit Your Business?



Don’t Risk What You Have Worked To Build

LEARN MORE

It’s Our Business to Protect Yours
FEDERATED
INSURANCE 

FPG Under New Ownership, Announces New Plan For Growth

Reprinted from the NFDA Director, Oct 2025

Foundation Partners Group (FPG), the second-largest funeral home provider in the United States, recently announced that the company is backed by new institutional investors that share its vision and commitment to the future of funeral care. These investors have committed fresh growth capital, effectively recapitalizing the business with modest leverage and strong liquidity.

According to a press release, the company has reached “a transformation milestone in its growth journey, including new ownership, increased investment in its people and facilities, and a strategic reorganization to strengthen field operations and support care teams.” There also is a new board of directors.

“These changes are bold by design,” said John D. Smith, CEO of FPG. “They reflect our commitment to operational excellence, a people-first culture, and a unified organization focused on growth and delivering exceptional care to families.”

Continued Smith, “This is a vote of confidence in our team, our strategy and our future. Our investors believe in what we’re building - and their investment gives us financial flexibility to grow, improve facilities and invest in our people.”

Organizational Realignment

To better support its 250-plus funeral homes, cremation centers and cemeteries across 21 states, FPG is realigning its leadership and operations.

- Execution resources are moving from the Support Center to the field
- Centers of Excellence are being built within the Support Center to promote field access and more effectively serve families
- Data, analytics and technology are being elevated to drive smarter, faster decision-making and growth

“As part of this shift, some leaders are transitioning out, and others are stepping into expanded roles,” Smith said. “We thank all those moving on for their contributions and are excited about the next generation of leadership driving performance where it matters most - in service to families.”

Investment In People, Facilities And Service

Smith emphasized that FPG is entering a new phase focused on organic growth, team development and modernized infrastructure.

- Facility upgrades and fleet improvements are underway

- Care centers are being enhanced to improve workflow and to elevate service and consistency
- Investments in training and tools will enable team members to serve with greater pride and effectiveness

“After years of growth through acquisition, we are now building a high-performing operating company driven by shared values, empowered people and consistent standards of care,” Smith said. “The future is bright - and it starts with our people.”

Providing Death Certificates To Cemeteries

Reprinted from a OHA Press Release. Oct 2025

According to Oregon Administrative Rules 333-011-0335(8), death certificates issued to funeral home staff can only be transferred to someone who would be eligible themselves to order the death certificate. Eligible relations are outlined in Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 432.380(2)(c)(B)(iii).

If a cemetery is carrying out a prearrangement trust fund, described in ORS 97.943, funeral home staff (referred to in the statute as ‘certified provider’) may order a death certificate and provide it to the cemetery because the cemetery when acting as ‘master trustee’ has a property right need for the certificate that is acceptable to the State Registrar that makes them eligible. It wouldn’t be ideal for cemetery staff to order the certificate directly, as additional documentation would be needed to prove their need, and ORS 97.943 (2) says the death certificate should be provided by the certified provider.

Please contact CHS.PartnerServices@oha.oregon.gov, if you have any questions.



Have you visited www.ofda.org lately?

Request forms available:

Department of Veterans Affairs
Oregon Army Military Funeral Honors
McChord Field Honor Guard
U.S. Navy Funeral Honors

Reimbursement forms available:

Indigent Burial Reimbursement Form
Solvita Reimbursement Form

Oregon Mortuary And
Cemetery Board Inspection Checklists:

OMCB Cemetery
OMCB Crematory
OMCB Funeral Establishment
OMCB Immediate Disposition
OMCB Alternative Disposition Facility

Tukios Acquires Batesville’s Website Hosting Services

Reprinted from the NFDA Director, Oct 2025

Tukios has acquired Batesville’s funeral home website hosting services, as well as its Floral Select, AI obituary writer and sympathy tree offerings. This transaction unlocks new opportunities for innovation and enables both companies to make strategic investments that align with their core areas of expertise.

In addition, the Tukios team is excited to unify the two new website hosting platforms and create the most robust solution possible. As a result of the transition, funeral home customers will benefit from a dedicated technology customized to meet their unique needs.

The companies are working together to ensure a seamless experience with no disruption in service for customers. Funeral homes will continue to receive the same features and high level of service. Customers also will have the option to take advantage of Tukios platform at their own pace and will not be required to make any immediate changes.

For more information, visit tukios.com

NFDA Supports New Legislation to Ensure Timely, Dignified Burials for Veterans

Reprinted from the NFDA Director, Sept. 2025

NFDA is supporting the Veterans Burial Accountability Act (HR 4398), a bipartisan bill introduced by Rep. Tom Emmer (R-Minn), majority whip of the U.S. House of Representatives. It would ensure veterans receive the timely, dignified burial services they deserve.

The bill would require Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) clinicians to sign death certificates within 48 hours of a veteran’s death. HR 4398 provides a sensible solution that respects the service and dignity of veterans, and ensures their families are not forced to delay burial or cremation. This legislation reflects the same mission of honoring veterans with respect, compassion and integrity that funeral service professionals uphold every day. NFDA has long advocated for improved funeral and burial benefits for those who served our country.

As the nation’s leading voice for funeral service, NFDA believes that no veteran should experience delays or indignities in their final arrangements. The association’s support for this bill reaffirms its ongoing commitment to honoring the sacrifices of U. S. military heroes.