

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

August 2025

August 3-6th
NFDA
Leadership Conference
Napa, CA

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



The Communicator

July/August 2025

Features

- 2President’s Letter
Executive Director’s Letter
- 32025-26 OFDA Meetings & Events
- 5-6Not Our Story, But Stil Our Problem
- 7Veterans & Caregivers: Recognize
VA Benefit Overpayment Scams
- 8Matthews Acquires Dodge
- 10Wait Times For Death Amendments
- 11Recruitment & Retention:
Real Advice From Real
Funeral Directors
- 14Starmark Local Celebrates
First Anniversary

2025-26 OFDA Meeting
Dates Announced!



The 2025-26 OFDA meeting and event dates
have been announced - the next District
Dinner meeting will be held at Seven Feathers
Casino Resort in Canyonville on October
21st, followed by District Dinner meetings at
Spirit Mountain in Grand Ronde on
November 18th, and at Mt. Hood Community
College in Gresham in January 2026.

Shown Above:
Seven Feathers Casino Resort
In Canyonville

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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.

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Wally Ordeman

President’s Letter

Can you feel it? The changes happening at OFDA are here! We heard your feedback from the convention and the appreciation you all had for new speakers, authentic connections and fresh ideas. The OFDA board had a very productive strategizing meeting, and we have made our goals and plans for the upcoming term.

I have been hearing from members throughout the state with concerns about the workforce and filling opening funeral director and embalmer positions. We do have a unique challenge in our offices in 2025. We have the most diverse work population than ever before and funeral homes are staffed by associates of many different generations from Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials and Gen Z. A one size fits all management approach is a thing of the past and employers are being tasked with being flexible and adjusting workplace policies and procedures.

This can be overwhelming, so please note there are many ways that OFDA can help. OFDA has practical services ready for you! OFDA members have access to HR experts through our relationship with the business, HR Answers. OFDA will also post and share any hiring postings for OFDA firms in good standing.

Lastly, OFDA is actively investigating adding a background check process for all members to access when they are vetting candidates for new hire. Myself, the OFDA Board and executive director are all here for your support. Don’t be afraid to pick up a phone or send an email and tell us what you are dealing with.

The OFDA team will continue to dig into new ideas and ways to help connect the dots with the ongoing labor shortage. If you have any ideas or suggestions on what we should be doing, reach out to me directly.

Big things are happening with OFDA. Save those dates for the upcoming district meetings, these will be events that you will not want to miss.

Angela McKenzie-Tucker
OFDA President
503-333-3624
Angela.McKenzie-Tucker@dignitymemorial.com

The Communicator

Page 2

Executive Director’s Letter

Hello colleagues!! I hope your summer is going well and you’re enjoying some relaxation time away from your firms and businesses. It’s always important to recharge the batteries.

Coming off of the crucial legislative victories we had in this year’s session, we may be asking for your help as legislative chair Angela navigates the rulemaking process in implementing lower crematory temps and doctors signing DC’s electronically. If you have an interest in participating in these processes, please contact me directly. I don’t think the process will be lengthy or complex, but we will keep you posted. Also legislatively, the OFDA board is now proactively looking forward to our next agendas. I hope that many of you participated in the survey with suggestions on industry oversight laws and rules that you’d like us to prioritize. Positive change happens when OFDA members participate. If something is keeping you up at night we want to hear from you!!


I hope you’ve had a chance to visit the new OFDA website. I think you’ll find it to be a fresh new avenue for you to stay informed on all things OFDA. And because it is new, we hope that you’ll make suggestions for adjustments or added content. My thanks to Mia for making this happen and for working to update the information as needed.

The fall and winter district meeting dates and locations are all set and can be found on the website. We continue to listen to your input and can promise relevancy and tangible information at each and every district meeting. And we are in the final stages of putting together a VERY exciting November district meeting at Spirit Mountain Casino in partnership with the OMCB and CAO which will include an afternoon strategic planning session with the OMCB board and staff. The evening after-dinner session will feature a presentation on Tribal customs and rites by the Tribal staff of Spirit Mountain. It should be fascinating for funeral directors and cemeterians alike. The OMCB wants big licensee participation in strategic planning so please save November 18th on your calendars! Stay tuned for registration information.

Over the next three months I’ll be hitting the road to visit with many of you. I look forward to seeing both our firm members, vendor partners, and trust participants. Thank you for your continued support of OFDA. There really is strength in numbers!!

Wally O.

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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



2025-26 OFDA Meetings & Events

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April 27-29th
The Graduate Hotel
Eugene, Oregon

A Global First: FIAT-IFTA Launches Landmark Embalming Practices Survey

Reprinted from NFDA.org

Fédération Internationale des Associations de Thanatologues - International Federation of Thanatologists Associations (FIAT-IFTA), the world organization of funeral operatives, is excited to launch the first-ever global survey on embalming. They warmly invite funeral directors and embalmers throughout the globe to take part.

This groundbreaking survey aims to capture a comprehensive picture of embalming and preparation practices around the world. Even if full embalming is not available or commonly practiced in your country, your response is still crucial. The survey is designed to reflect the diversity of approaches to body preparation and care globally. The insights gathered will help FIAT-IFTA:

- Understand embalming practices in different regions
- Identify challenges and variations in techniques
- Work toward establishing global minimal standards for different types of embalming
- Ultimately improve the care provided to bereaved families everywhere

Your voice matters. By participating, you are contributing to a global effort to advance the funeral service profession and the service provided to grieving families. The survey is open until September 20.

Please visit <https://es/surveymonkey.com/r/EmbalmingSurvey?lang=en> to complete the survey. Providing your name and email address is optional, should you prefer to remain anonymous.



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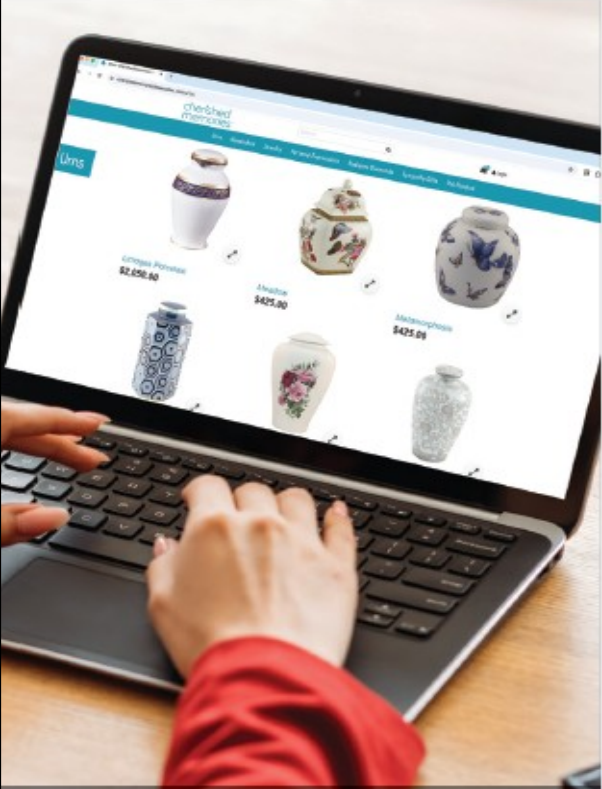
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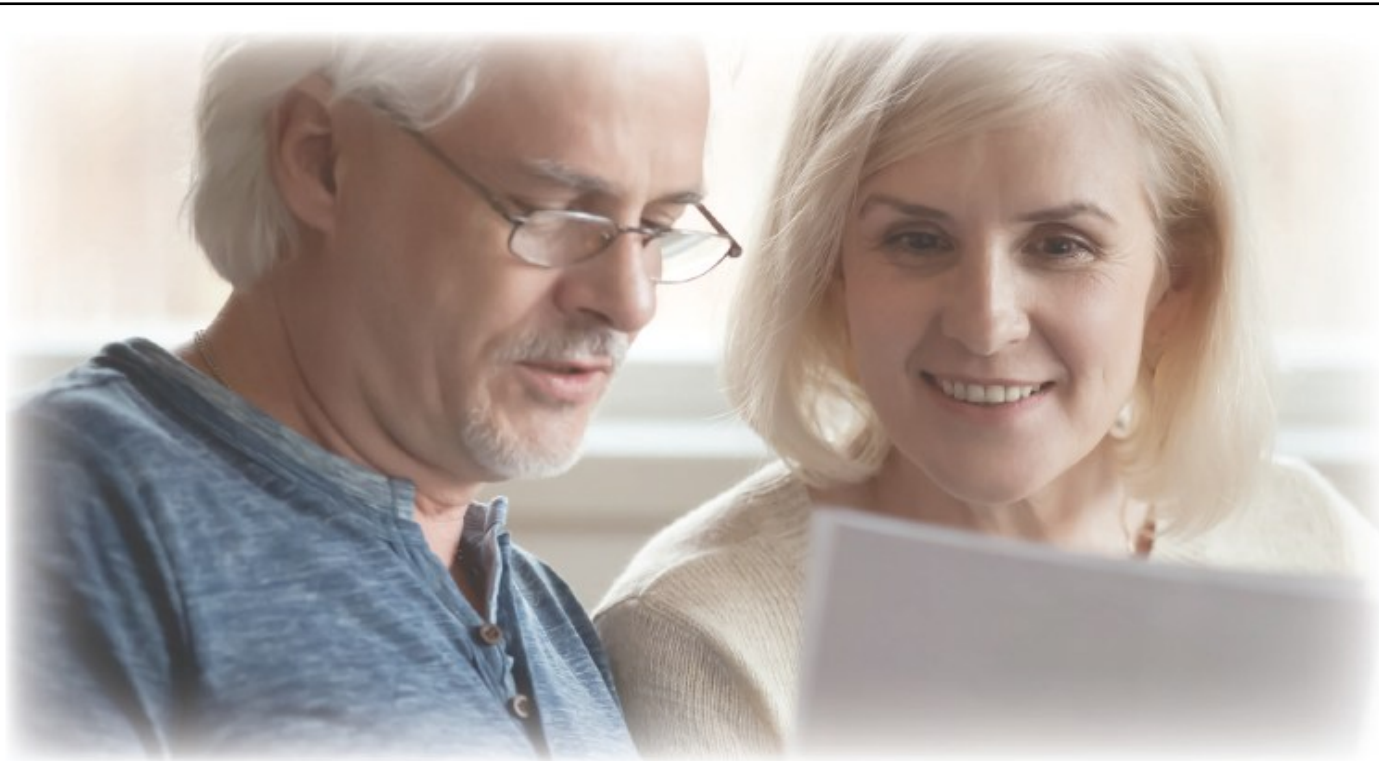
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Please contact us at 1.800.457.1111 to be connected with your Matthews Aurora Funeral Service Consultant.

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Robert Goff, CFSP
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Oregon Policy Numbers:
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Not Our Story, But Still Our Problem

Reprinted from NFDA's Memorial Business Journal

A new documentary series has revived an old scandal – and it's a stark reminder that, though the public might judge funeral service by its worst headlines, funeral directors have the power to build trust and shape the narrative every day.

I watched the first episodes of HBO's documentary series called *The Mortician*, and truthfully, it was hard to watch and has been bothering me since. I'm bothered not because the storytelling is graphic or sensational (though it certainly doesn't shy away from the sickening details) but because the man at the center of the series, David Sconce, represents everything the funeral directors I know are not.

Over the past 18 years, I've had the privilege of working alongside some of the most compassionate, ethical and community-minded professionals one could hope to meet. Sconce, by contrast, operated without integrity, exploited grieving families, and violated every standard of decency and care that this profession holds sacred. It's the same feeling many of us get when a sensational story that paints funeral service in a dark, unethical light breaks. We know these stories are the outliers, not the norm. For those who haven't seen it, *The Mortician* revisits the story of Sconce, a California crematory operator who, in the 1980s, was convicted of grotesquely mishandling human remains.

Among his many crimes: cremating multiple bodies at once, extracting gold fillings from decedents, stealing personal effects of the deceased and delivering mixed cremated remains to grieving families. He turned his family's crematory into a high-volume, low-ethics operation, driven by profit and run with a shocking disregard for the dignity of the dead and their loved ones. He also made threats against other funeral service professionals and paid people to beat up those who sought to expose his horrifying practices.

For some viewers, *The Mortician* is their first exposure to funeral service. For others, the series reaffirms long-standing doubts or uneasiness about what occurs behind the closed doors of a funeral home. As I brace myself for the final installment, I think about the fact that this story – one that took place nearly four decades ago – is being thrust back into the news cycle in 2025. I worry about how it might shape the perceptions of people who have never had the chance to meet a good funeral director or who already carry doubts about our profession.

It's easy to dismiss the three-part documentary as sensationalism, but the uncomfortable reality is this: When one funeral director's actions make headlines, the public doesn't see them as a rogue deathcare provider but as part of a larger system. We cannot ignore stories like this, but we can respond by reaffirming who we are and what we represent. This is why reputation management is more than just a business concern – it's a professional responsibility.

BEFORE THE FIRST CALL

Incidents such as those portrayed in *The Mortician* can shake public confidence, but they also serve to remind us how important it is to shape the narrative before someone else does it for us. Most people don't form their opinion about a funeral home during a service. Reputation mounts quietly and gradually – when someone drives past your building, glances at your website, reads an online review or hears a neighbor's story over coffee.

For that reason, your reputation is always subject to change. It's bolstered – or damaged – by every interaction, every impression, every moment of visibility. Although you can't prevent a TV series like *The Mortician* from airing, you can ensure that the story people believe about your funeral home is one of transparency, trust and care. That kind of trust isn't built in a single day or with a one-off campaign. It's built by everyday actions that reflect your values and reassure families that they're in good hands.

STRENGTHENING AND SAFEGUARDING YOUR REPUTATION

You don't need a marketing team or PR budget to manage your reputation – you just need to present your firm to the public and serve your community with intentionality. Here are a few steps every funeral home can take:

1. Be transparent, even when no one's asking. Most consumers have no idea what happens to their loved one while they're in your care – and what consumers don't know, they often fear. Transparency is the antidote.

Create opportunities to educate families, even before they ask. Gently walk them through what happens behind the scenes. Explain your processes for identifying remains, tracking chain of custody, and maintaining dignity and respect. A little information can go a long way in calming anxiety and building confidence. Families might then share this information with others in your community.

2. Communicate your credentials and affiliations. Many families assume that funeral homes are regulated, licensed and held to strict standards – and they're right! But assumptions aren't enough. Be explicit.

Ensure your licenses are displayed prominently in public spaces. If you are part of NFDA or your state association, or have earned certifications or a Pursuit of Excellence Award, say so loudly and proudly. These affiliations matter. They signal to the public that you don't just meet the minimum standard but that you are striving for more.

3. Introduce the people behind the business. One of the most effective ways to build trust is by humanizing your staff. On your website and social media, share who you are: your values, your experience and your role in the community. Use staff spotlights, behind-the-scenes videos or photos of your team at local events. These personal touches remind the public that funeral service isn't transactional – it's relational. It's built on compassion and service.

Not Our Story, But Still Our Problem
Continued on Page 6

4. Monitor and respond to online reviews. Even if you don't engage online, your community does. People are reading reviews. They are posting on local Facebook groups. They are turning to Google, Yelp and even Reddit.

Take control of the conversation by claiming your online listings, encouraging satisfied families to leave honest comments, and responding to positive and negative reviews with grace and professionalism. Don't let silence speak for you.

5. Turn community engagement into your reputation strategy. Every interaction is a chance to show – not just tell – your community who you are and what you represent.

Participate in community events. Host grief-support workshops. Offer tours of your facilities for civic groups, church members and local students. The more your name is associated with service, compassion and education, the less your community will be swayed by negative media portrayals.

ONE BAD ACTOR

When David Sconce committed his crimes, he tarnished the public's perception of those who work in funeral service. Unfortunately, that perception still lingers. We saw it in the documentary series. We observe it in online comment sections. We hear it in the uncomfortable jokes and skeptical questions that people make and ask when they learn what we do for a living.

Yet, every day, you and your colleagues prove that our profession is defined not by scandal but by service. By integrity. By compassion. By families that say, "I don't know how we would have gotten through that without you."

That's the definition the public needs to hear more often, and it's up to all of us to share it.

EARNED NOT OWNED

Reputation is not a logo, a slogan or a plaque on the wall. It's not something you own. It's something you earn – one conversation, one family, one moment at a time.

Although The Mortician might cast a shadow, it also offers a reminder: We can't control which stories make the headlines, but we can control the story we live every day – and that story matters.

Let's make sure it's one worth telling.

Documentary Casts a Shadow,
But Our Story Shines Through

Reprinted from NFDA.org

An HBO docuseries, "The Mortician," which was released last month, has brought a decades-old scandal back into the spotlight, and with it, renewed questions about trust in funeral service. The series chronicles the crimes of David Sconce, a crematory operator in California who, in the 1980s, committed egregious violations of human dignity, ethics and law.

NFDA prepared comments in response to the documentary. In it, we reaffirm what families deserve to know: that today's funeral professionals uphold the highest standards of care and conduct and are deeply committed to the communities they serve.

As outlined in a recent *Memorial Business Journal* article titled "Not Our Story, But Still Our Problem," the series is a sobering reminder that, while one individual's horrific actions do not define our profession, they can shape public perception, especially when amplified by mass media.

"Though the public might judge funeral service by its worst headlines," the article notes, "funeral directors have the power to build trust and shape the narrative every day."

The story of David Sconce is not the story of funeral service today. But NFDA recognizes that documentaries like "The Mortician" can cast a long shadow. That's why we encourage every funeral professional to take steps, both large and small, to strengthen their reputation, promote transparency and engage their community.

We can't change the past, and we can't prevent every negative story from surfacing. But we can control what people see, hear and feel when they interact with a funeral professional today. The truth is, every day, NFDA members prove what this profession is truly about: compassion, dignity, service and care. It's our job, and our opportunity, to make sure that's the story the public hears.

Let's lead with integrity, and let our daily actions be our best response.



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To learn more, contact Joshua at Cascade Life Alliance: voylesj@ohsu.edu

Batesville Releases Two 28-Inch Wide Wood Caskets

Reprinted from NFDA.org

Batesville recently launched two patent-pending oversize hardwood caskets, engineered to provide a full 28 inches of interior width while still fitting into a standard vault. The latest additions to Dimensions, Batesville’s oversize casket collection, the Bailey 28 and Clifton 28 include the company’s Family Choices personalization features.

Jenn Parvin, senior vice president and chief marketing officer of Batesville, notes that approximately 75,000 funerals will require an oversize casket in 2025. Batesville’s patent-pending construction and design provide approximately 1 inch of additional interior width without adding to the exterior dimensions. This allows the caskets to fit in a standard-size burial vault. The Bailey 28 and Clifton 28 complement Batesville’s current Dimensions line, which already included a selection of 28-inch metal caskets that fit into a standard vault.

Accentuated by a khaki fabric interior and Charpente interior system, the Bailey 28 features a satin pecan finish and embossed swing bar. The Bailey can accommodate four Family Choices corner designs at no additional charge and is available in half- and full-couch models.

The Clifton 28 has a Victorian cherry stain and crepe interior with a dual overlay for added flexibility. The built-in LifeView decorative panel can be personalized with family photos or mementos, and the casket can be fitted out with one of more than 80 LifeStories corner or medallion designs.

Starmark Local Celebrates First Anniversary

Reprinted from NFDA.org

Vandor Corporation is celebrating the first anniversary of its Starmark Local distribution center in Statesville, North Carolina. Starmark Local opened in May 2024 and tackled some challenges, including Hurricane Helene, in its first year. Starmark Local started with Haley Cowles as service center director; today, there are three team members. Together, they serve funeral homes and crematories in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and Tennessee.

“Opening Starmark Local in North Carolina has been such an exciting adventure for us. Joining a new company and having Starmark trust me to build this local business from the ground up has been an honor,” Cowles said. “Being new to the funeral industry, I was very nervous, but with the great leadership and training from Starmark, they helped us succeed in our first year!”

Showcase Your Skills: Apply Now For The First-Ever Restorative Arts Technical Showcase

Reprinted from NFDA.org

Are you ready to take the spotlight and show your mastery of restorative art? For the first time ever, NFDA will host the Restorative Arts Technical Showcase during the 2025 International Convention & Expo in Chicago and applications are now open!

This groundbreaking event celebrates the art and science behind some of the most powerful work funeral professionals do: restoring dignity and peace for grieving families. If you’re passionate about restorative art and have the skills to match, we want to see what you can do

What to Expect Over two days (Monday and Tuesday of Convention), up to eight skilled contestants will complete a real-time restorative challenge using professional-grade materials and equipment provided by Post Mortem Restorative Cosmetics. Each contestant will have three total hours (1.5 hours per day) to complete their case in front of a live audience. A professional video crew will capture the competition for a special behind-the-scenes documentary.

Judges

A panel of internationally renowned restorative art experts will evaluate each participant’s work:

- Glyn Tallon
- Vernie Fountain
- Karl Wenzel

Why Apply?

- Gain national recognition
- Share your expertise with peers
- Be part of a first-of-its-kind event that reaffirms NFDA’s commitment to excellence in embalming and restorative care

How Do I Apply?

Licensed funeral directors/embalmers with at least three years of experience and a strong background in major restorative cases are encouraged to apply. The application requires you to:

- Answer questions about your restorative art experience
- Submit a letter of recommendation from someone familiar with your restoration skills

Applications are due August 21.
Selected contestants will be notified by August 29.

Veterans And Caregivers: Recognize VA Benefit Overpayment Scams

Reprinted from NFDA.org

You may want to alert veterans and their families of a scam related to benefit overpayments. Sometimes, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) sends letters indicating an overpayment of benefits; this overage must be paid back to the VA. The VA offers repayment help for free, but scammers will try to convince you to pay them instead.

Got a letter in the mail from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) saying you owe money due to an overpayment of your benefits? You might be wondering: Was I really overpaid? How much do I need to pay back? To get real answers to questions like these, always start by logging into your VA.gov account.

If your VA.gov account shows you owe money, know the VA offers repayment help for free. But scammers will tell you different and try to convince you to pay them instead. Some scammers pretend to be someone from the VA to trick you into sending them your money or sensitive information. Some might even use names, seals, and logos that look or sound like legit organizations to trick you into paying a scammer for help that’s actually free.

If you’re managing VA debt for benefit overpayments, here’s how to take scammers out of the equation:

Only manage VA debt for overpayments through the VA.

Use VA.gov sites to check the status of your debt, set up a repayment plan, or request a waiver. Or call the VA’s debt management call center at 1.800.827.0648. Scammers use official-looking names, seals, logos, and websites to seem legit. If someone sends you to a site outside of VA.gov or tells you to call a different phone number, walk away.

Don’t share your VA login credentials or password.

The VA won’t ask you to share that information, but a scammer will. Set up strong passwords and multi-factor authentication on your VA accounts.

Never pay an upfront fee.

Need help filing claims or requesting decision reviews? Find an VA accredited representative to help you — for free. If someone says you have to pay them before they’ll help you, that’s a scam.

Learn more about VA benefits scams and report scams at ReportFraud.ftc.gov.

Big Ideas, Bold Inspiration: The 2025 NFDA International Convention & Expo

Reprinted from NFDA.org

Get ready to be inspired! The 2025 NFDA International Convention & Expo, taking place October 26-29 in Chicago, will feature two dynamic keynote speakers who are ready to challenge your thinking, spark creativity and energize your work in funeral service.

Opening General Session – Monday, October 27
“Virtuoso: Living the Virtuoso Life”
Presented by Felipe Gómez

Blending business insight with live music, global speaker and bestselling author Felipe Gómez will deliver a powerful keynote centered on the concept of virtuosity – doing everything with mastery, purpose and heart. With over 25 years of leadership experience, Gómez will inspire attendees to embrace conscious listening, lead with intention and drive innovation in their organizations. *Sponsored by National Guardian Life.*

Closing General Session – Wednesday, October 29
“Futureproof Yourself: Innovate and Thrive in Times of Uncertainty”
Presented by Crystal Washington

Technology futurist and Forbes-recognized thought leader Crystal Washington will show you how to adapt and thrive in a constantly changing world. With practical, forward-thinking strategies, she’ll help you uncover the hidden opportunities in your day-to-day work and give you tools to embrace change with confidence. *Sponsored by Carriage.*

Whether you’re seeking motivation, leadership insights, or tools to navigate change, these keynote sessions are must-attend moments at this year’s Convention.

Register today at NFDA.org/Convention and get ready to be inspired in Chicago!

Mental Health Hub: Achieve A Healthy Balance

Reprinted from NFDA.org

Balancing the demands of your career and your personal life can be challenging. While these responsibilities can be incredibly rewarding, they can also lead to stress. SupportLinc, provides free, 24/7 confidential support to members and their immediate family members. Visit nfda.mysupportportal.com or learn more at NFDA.org/SupportLinc

Services include:

- Immediate Support & Counseling: Phone, web, text, or app access to licensed clinicians, plus three in-person or video sessions per year.
- Digital Support Groups with licensed counselors.
- Legal & Financial Consultations.
- Referrals for Services: Child care, elder care, pet care, home repair, and more.
- Online Resources for self-care and mental health.
- Discounts on products and services you use every day.
- And more.

Scam Alert: Elaborate Scheme Targets Funeral Home

Reprinted from NFDA.org

An NFDA member in Kansas recently encountered one of the most sophisticated scams we’ve heard of in quite some time. A scammer posing as the son of a decedent contacted the funeral home to arrange a service and requested that the firm wire payment (nearly \$3,000) to a band they wanted to perform at the service.

The funeral director, who has nearly 30 years of experience, described the scam as one of the most convincing they’ve seen. The fraudster provided a service folder featuring a photo and obituary and communicated through well-written emails. They even submitted a realistic-looking invoice from the band, complete with a working website.

Initially, the caller’s request seemed legitimate. The funeral home processed a credit card payment from the “family” and, after speaking with the band’s so-called manager, obtained bank details to initiate the wire transfer. Fortunately, the bank declined the transaction without further information and documentation. At that point, the funeral director notified the caller that the funeral home would refund the money intended for the band and that the family would need to handle payment arrangements directly. This incident serves as a powerful reminder: scammers are becoming increasingly sophisticated and targeted in their efforts. Stay vigilant, trust your instincts and don’t hesitate to verify unusual requests, especially those involving financial transactions on behalf of third parties.

Matthews Acquires Dodge

Reprinted from NFDA’s The Director, August 2025

Mathews Memorialization, a division of Matthews International Corporation, has acquired The Dodge Company, a leading supplier of embalming chemicals and supplies as well as a variety of other deathcare products. Dodge CEO Tim Collison has made a long-term commitment to continue leading Dodge as part of Matthews.

For Dodge customers, essentially nothing will change as a result of the acquisition. They can continue to order the same products through their Dodge sales representatives. In addition, Dodge sales representatives will contact customers with information about the acquisition and to answer any questions. In the meantime, customers with questions may reach out to their Dodge sales representative.

“The thought of selling our 132-year-old family business was very difficult, but the decision to join Matthews was the easy part; it felt right,” said Debbie and Kristie Dodge. “We’re confident they’ll continue our tradition of providing customers with outstanding service and products, and we know from friends who are part of Matthews that they value and respect employees - something very important to generations of Dodges.”

Help Shape the Future of Licensure: Join ICFSEB’s Model Application Committee

Reprinted from NFDA.org


The International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards (ICFSEB) is beginning an update of the Conference Model Application, a resource designed to promote consistency and best practices in the funeral service licensure process.

To ensure the updated document reflects the evolving needs of its regulatory membership, ICFSEB is forming a Model Application Committee and invites interested individuals from its member boards to participate.

Committee participation will involve a limited number of virtual meetings over the coming months. Individuals from its member boards interested in volunteering, contact andrew@theconferenceonline.org.

Throughout the year, ICFSEB offers several volunteer opportunities, including those pertaining to model documents, NBE item-writing and review, exam development, comment review and more.

Visit theconferenceonline.org/committees/ to learn more about volunteer opportunities and to join the volunteer list.



Center for Loss & Life Transition

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July 7, 2025

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**** FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ****

Celebrating 40 Years of Serving Families and Educating Communities About Grief

Fort Collins, CO... This year the Center for Loss and Life Transition is pleased to be celebrating 40 years of “helping people help others.” The Center for Loss & Life Transition was founded in 1985 by internationally acclaimed author and educator Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt.

For 40 years the Center for Loss and Life Transition has provided grief education to caregivers and counselors, provided workshops for the bereaved across North America, and published books and resources for those in grief.

“It has been an honor to support many grieving children, teens, adults and families over the last 40 years,” said Dr. 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. To have so many organizations put my Companioning Model of Grief Care into practice has been very humbling. I plan to keep writing my books as long as my readers encourage me to do so. After all, only 10 more years of service to make it to our 50th Anniversary!”

To order and to learn more about the Center for Loss and Life Transition visit www.centerforloss.com or call (970) 226-6050.

The Communicator

Page 13

OGR To Host
Future Leaders Forum

Reprinted from a OGR Press Release , July 11, 2025

The International Order of the Golden Rule (OGR) is proud to announce the upcoming Future Leaders Forum, presented by Full-Circle Aftercare, held August 25-27, 2025, at the Karrer-Simpson Funeral Home, an affiliate location of Pollock-Randall Funeral Home in Port Huron, Michigan. This event is designed to nurture and develop the next generation of leaders in the funeral service profession. This two-day program will gather young professionals, first and second-career individuals and emerging leaders for engaging education, problem-solving exercises and strategic discussions.

"We are pleased to host the 2025 OGR Future Leaders Forum in Port Huron," said Ann Randall, Pollock-Randall Funeral Home. "It will be a great time of sharing, connecting and learning together while enjoying late August in our beautiful Blue Water Area on Pure Michigan's Thumb Coast." The theme for the 2025 Future Leaders Forum is "Own the Future." Participants will explore visionary concepts and innovative strategies that can help shape the funeral home of the future. The program will feature a diverse 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" with OGR Members Chris Janowiak, Shelly Brown-Chudzinski, Phil Vallelunga, and Sara Walsh*
- " Star Trek and Vikings.... At a Funeral? aka Dare to Use Your Imagination" with Joe E. Pray, Pray Funeral Home*
- "The Power of Moments Workshop" led by Matthew Van Drimmelen, Full-Circle Aftercare*
- Optional social activities, including a lighthouse tour and an evening at a local lake house.*

"It's an honor to support the OGR Future Leaders Forum and share knowledge with the rising stars of our profession," said Matt Van Drimmelen, Full-Circle Aftercare. "Investing in the next generation of funeral service leaders ensures a stronger, more compassionate future for the families and communities we serve."

Continuing education credits in accordance with state regulations are also available.

To support the attendance of OGR member funeral homes, the OGR Foundation is offering \$350 scholarships to the first fifteen (15) OGR member funeral homes who register a staff member for the Future Leaders Forum.

"As funeral homeowners in an ever-evolving field, we know how important it is to nurture and develop the next generation of leaders," said Chris Miller, Chair of the OGR Foundation Board.

"The Future Leaders Forum is an incredible opportunity for our emerging professionals to gain essential skills, connect with like-minded peers, and grow into the leaders our profession needs. I wholeheartedly encourage you to send your rising stars to this event. With the scholarships available through our foundation, there's no better time to invest in their future and, in turn, the future of our independently owned funeral homes."

Express Funeral Funding is also a sponsor of the event. "EFF is honored to support OGR and is deeply committed to investing in the next generation of funeral service professionals," said Deanna Wilkinson, Vice President of Sales and Marketing. "Have fun and take this opportunity to grow, connect and lead the way forward in our vital and innovative industry!"

The Future Leaders Forum warmly welcomes participation from both OGR member and non-member firms. For more information and to register, visit www.OGR.org/future-leaders-forum.

About the International Order of the Golden Rule
The International Order of the Golden Rule (OGR) is an association of independently owned and operated funeral homes dedicated to ethical service to all. Founded in 1928, it is our mission to make independent funeral homes exceptional. We do this by building and supporting member interaction, information exchange and professional business development through a wide range of programs, services and resources. For more information, visit www.ogr.org.



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Eligibility Requirements When Applicant Is Informant

Reprinted from the Oregon Health Authority newsletter

Vital records procedures are sometimes reviewed and updated to improve processes for staff and those we serve. The Center for Health Statistics (CHS) recently examined procedures for determining if someone is eligible to order death certificates when the Applicant is also the Informant. We hope the following clarification helps orders be processed more efficiently and gets death certificates into the hands of those who are legally eligible for them faster.

If the Applicant for a death record is the Informant, the Informant Relationship listed on the death record is an eligible relation, and the Informant's name matches the Applicant's ID, no additional documents are needed to prove their relation to the Decedent. It is a fact on the record, just as it is for a parent listed on a birth or death record. The name of the Applicant must match the Informant name, and the Informant Relationship on the death record must clearly be an eligible relation such as Brother, Daughter, Spouse, or Executor.

If the name of the Informant does **not** match the name of the Applicant, the Informant Relationship is not an eligible relation, or there are other factors that call into question a person's eligibility (such as Informant Relationship being Spouse but the Informant not being listed in the Spouse Name fields) then additional documentation should be requested.

Remember, the Informant is not automatically eligible to order death certificates. They must have an eligible relationship to the Decedent. Also, the Informant cannot be changed from one person to another after a death record is registered so death records cannot be amended to facilitate making proof of eligibility easier for someone who wishes to become the Informant.

For questions, please contact:
CHS.PartnerServices@oha.oregon.gov.

2025 Legislative Summary

Reprinted from the Oregon Health Authority newsletter

House Bill 3127: HB 3127 requires reporting of deaths through the electronic system (OVERS) with some ability for the State Registrar to make exceptions. This law goes into effect on January 1, 2026.

Requiring that all death records be reported using the electronic death reporting system was one of the recommendations proposed in the House Bill 2420 Work Group Report: Recommendations for Equitable Access to Birth and Death Records.

We will be sharing more information with you about changes resulting from these new laws in upcoming newsletters. For questions about legislation that affects vital records, please contact CHS.PartnerServices@oha.oregon.gov.

Wait Time For Death Amendments

Reprinted from the Oregon Health Authority newsletter

Death amendments are taking longer to process than usual due to lack of staff.

For non-electronic amendments (sent by fax or mail), the current time estimate is 19 weeks.

Electronic funeral home amendments submitted in OVERS are typically processed within 2 weeks, if there are no issues with the requested change.

If you have questions about an amendment or it has been more than two weeks since it was submitted in OVERS, please contact CHS.Amendments@oha.oregon.gov. We appreciate your patience as we train new staff.



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

Recruitment & Retention - Real Advice From Real Funeral Directors

Reprinted from NFDA.org

How can funeral homes attract and retain qualified staff in today's challenging environment? The Funeral and Memorial Information Council (FAMIC) is helping answer that question with a new series of short videos featuring real funeral professionals sharing practical, peer-driven advice.

Among those featured is NFDA member Adam Martin, Mount Morris, Michigan, who offers valuable insights into how he has built a staff whose core values align with those of his business. The full "Hiring and Retention: Tips from Your Colleagues" series includes 13 videos from funeral professionals across the U.S. and around the globe, covering topics like:

- Building inclusive workplace cultures
- Promoting staff well-being and mental health
- Creating recruitment pipelines through community outreach

This collaborative effort by FAMIC, NFDA, Selected Independent Funeral Homes and OGR delivers real-world solutions to one of the profession's most pressing issues.

Explore the full series on the FAMIC YouTube Channel: [YouTube.com/@FAMIC_Tips](https://www.youtube.com/@FAMIC_Tips).