

The WCCA Reporter

A Wisconsin Cemetery & Cremation Association Publication



President's Message

A message by WCCA President Christine Toson Hentges



To start a New Year often means to start a new goal. This is significant for our

organization, as it is turning a corner of success. With the first phase of the membership drive in full swing, a new name to the association, a website under construction and our executive director, Hoven Consulting guiding us towards a positive future, this is the beginning of a new adventure! How exciting!

I thank all of our members for the support, encouragement and cooperation with all of these ideas that we are imple-

menting. And without Michael Welsh and Tim Hoven doing a great deal of work for the association to drive forward, it simply would not get done. We all need to be thankful for what our association can do for each of our businesses. Be sure to utilize the knowledge we have amongst our members to the fullest.

Without us working together, networking and supporting the best ethics, operations and contributions to our communities, our association does not exist.

Recently, I read a nationally published article about how a Milwaukee-based Funeral Director feels that 50% of all funeral homes and cemeteries should just go away due to fact that they are outdated, operate poorly and do nothing to help the consumer. I have to admit that I agree completely

"We all need to be thankful for what our association can do for each of our businesses."

with that. Our members make up a minuscule number of cemeteries that exist in the state of

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Speak Out

Banking technology and improving your bottom line.

By Kelly Brown, Senior Vice-President — First Wisconsin Bank & Trust

In today's complex financial market, technology changes more quickly than most rates do. The cemetery industry is in a perfect position to benefit from these advancements in banking technology. Perhaps the most important development in the past three years is the introduction of Remote Deposit Capture. Also known as RDC, eXpress Deposit, or Desk-

top Deposit, this technology can create substantial efficiencies and add dollars directly to your bottom line.

Whether you have heard of the technology or not, you need to understand the technology and how it can help you



with cash flow, risk and funds management.

Remote Deposit Capture has been called "The most important development the (U.S.) banking industry has seen in years" by the

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Federal Reserve and others. This technology has enabled many businesses—large and small—to be in control of their banking and gain efficiencies where none previously existed.

Remote Deposit Capture is a desktop imager that takes an image of the front and back of a check and then sends the image directly



to your bank for processing. RDC allows a company to capture deposits in their office and can eliminate the need for the checks to be transported to the bank. Most often, banks impose a

“cutoff” time for processing deposits. With RDC, most cutoffs are eliminated as deposits can be made 24 hours per day, seven days a week. The combination of more processing time for the cemetery

and later deposit deadlines results in accelerated clearing times. With accelerated clearings comes improved availability of funds, which results in improved cash flow and working capital for your cemetery. There are also benefits such as reduced return item risks, convenience, reduced processing costs and

most importantly, consolidated bank relationships.

For the cemetery owner that has multiple locations, RDC is key to gaining efficiencies and adding dollars to the bottom line. Gone are the days of having a bank account for the sole purpose of making deposits close to the cemetery. With RDC, one banking relationship is utilized with an account for each cemetery.

A RDC machine is installed in each location allowing the controller the ease of managing the accounts from one central location. This can add a tremendous value to those owners of multiple locations.

For most of you, this technology

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Save the Date: WCCA Lobby Day and Seminar

Mark your calendars - on **Wednesday, March 14, 2007**, the Wisconsin Cemetery & Cremation Association will hold its annual Lobby Day and professional seminars in Madison.

The event will allow WCCA members to meet with their legislators and advance the WCCA legislative agenda—which is vitally important to the future growth and success of our industry.

The daylong event will also include professional seminars, where you'll hear from experts on how to reduce

business costs and increase revenue generation.

The event is tentatively scheduled from 9am to 3pm at the Madison

Hilton (lunch will be provided), so please remember to make travel plans accordingly. If anyone requires a hotel room the night before,

please contact Michael Welsh at (608) 310-8833.

A registration form and event agenda will be sent out to all members in the next few weeks, so please keep your eyes open.



Also, please note that this year's Lobby Day and seminar will replace the WCCA annual meeting usually

held in June. However, our two-day convention will return in 2008.

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Wisconsin. It needs to be commended that we represent the best and most admired cemeteries in the state.

Are you doing everything you can to portray that image to your employees, to the local community, to the local funeral homes we serve and most importantly to the consumers that you do business with? I am confident that we all find areas where we can

improve. This association exists to help all of you find those ways. Where are those 50% of the cemeteries that should not exist? All around us – you know who they are. Maybe the Wisconsin Cemetery and Cremation Association can help them realize their true purpose and join the ranks of those of us who know why we are in business. Spread the word that we are here to help.

Have a healthy and prosperous New Year!



Industry News

Cemetery fights unsanitary geese

By Perry Beeman

Printed in the **Des Moines Register** on December 20, 2006

First, Des Moines attacked the gregarious geese of Glendale Cemetery with concentrated grape juice. Crews sprayed the juice all over the grass. That's supposed to make the blades taste bad to waterfowl. It worked in the small areas that got the grape treatment, but cemetery workers were looking for a solution that doesn't wash away in the rain.

So the city is calling out the dogs, noisemakers and repellent sprayers.

The city considers the 700 to 2,000 geese visiting Glendale a health threat and a nuisance. The geese soil grave markers and huge expanses of lawn. The wastes can spread histoplasmosis, salmonella and other diseases. The piles also send natural fertilizers into the pond, feeding algae blooms.

So the city, like so many pond owners in the area, is ramping up the fight. As early as this week, a contractor will release a dog to chase the geese at the west-side cemetery, a technique suggested by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The company also will use a device that fires blanks and sounds like a shotgun.

To keep geese away from grave areas and closer to the pond, city crews may spray a commercial product that lasts longer than grape-juice concentrate, said cemetery operations supervisor Randy Fiscel. And they may spread products made of feces and urine from goose predators, something that apparently alerts the geese that they may want to choose a new pond.

It's not just the pond area that is soiled at Glendale. "There proba-

bly isn't a 6-inch-by-6-inch patch of green that isn't covered," he said of the grave site areas.

The hope is that the geese will fly south rather than put up with the harassment.

The city, which moved several dozen geese from Glendale in recent years, doesn't have this type of problem, or campaign, in other parks, said parks director Don Tripp. Gray's Lake gets its share of geese sometimes, but all the traffic and activity at the recreation area usually keeps them moving. Occasionally, migrating geese stop at Blank Golf Course, but they usually move on when activity picks up.

The city plans to start a two-week, \$1,500 goose-harassment campaign this week at Glendale, if a noise permit from the police department comes through. When the geese come back in the spring, the parks department will spend another \$750 to discourage geese from nesting in the cemetery. Once geese nest in an area, they usually come back every year.

At this point, the city has no plans to trap and move the birds, or to kill any.

It's not that all the geese are unwelcome at the cemetery near 55th Street and University Avenue. The city actually feeds geese that stay all winter at the cemetery. It's the migratory geese that have boosted the numbers to unacceptable levels, Fiscel said. The city is discouraging people from feeding geese at Glendale until the numbers come down.

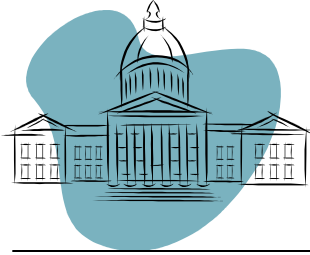


Quick Tips:

Keeping geese in check

The mere presence of geese isn't necessarily a problem. The concern for cemetery owners should be with the number of geese who take refuge on your land. More than anything, it takes persistence and patience to keep geese from becoming pests. Below are a few tactics you can employ to help win the battle against unwelcome geese:

- **USE SCARE TACTICS** - Familiarity makes Geese feel safe. Change threatens them and makes them question their surroundings. Try putting out flags, employing swan decoys (a natural enemy of geese), or letting your dog chase — and eventually scare — them off your property. Loud noises may also work. Ultimately, geese will go elsewhere if they are constantly harassed.
- **BARRIERS** - Geese tend to walk to their feeding site from the water and rarely use the energy to fly over a fence or a hedge. They like to see their surroundings and tend to avoid places that restrict their vision. Planting a hedge between your pond and open mowed grass creates a low-maintenance barrier and helps keep the geese away.
- **DON'T FEED THEM** - Not that it's necessarily a problem in cemeteries, but Geese tend to concentrate wherever people feed them. It encourages them to stay and "set-up" camp. Don't make geese feel at home.



WCA Regulatory Review

WISCONSIN FAIR EMPLOYMENT LAW: keep your job interviews legal

Overview by the WI Department of Workforce Development

One of the purposes of Wisconsin’s fair employment law is to encourage employers to evaluate job applicants on the basis of their qualifications rather than on a particular class to which they may belong. It is unlawful to make any inquiry in connection with prospective employment that implies or expresses any discrimination based on any of the following:

- **Race**
- **National origin**
- **Marital status**
- **Color**
- **Age**
- **Sexual orientation**
- **Creed**
- **Sex**
- **Arrest record**
- **Ancestry**
- **Disability**
- **Military reserve duty**

Listed below are some “loaded questions” you should avoid when interviewing potential employees:

AGE or DATE OF BIRTH?

Age based inquiries should be avoided because state law prohibits discrimination against persons age 40 and older. An age inquiry may be made to ensure a person is “old enough” to fill the job or if it is among the few jobs where age discrimination is permitted.

ARRESTED or CONVICTED?

Wisconsin law prohibits inquiries about **past arrest** records but permits consideration of a current arrests.

CHILDREN or PREGNANT?

Typically, questions about children are asked only of women making the inquiry clearly unlawful. However, even if such inquiries are made of both men and women, the questions may still be suspect.

CITIZEN OF WHAT COUNTRY?

Inquiries about a person’s citizenship or country of birth are unlawful and imply discrimination on the basis of national origin. However, an employer can ask potential new hires if they have a legal right to work in America.

DISABILITIES or HEALTH HISTORY?

Inquiries about a person’s disability or health are unlawful if they imply or express a limitation based on disability. However, an employer may inquire about the ability to perform certain job functions.

CREDIT or GARNISHMENT RECORD?

Answers to these inquiries are almost always irrelevant to job performance. Therefore, requests of this nature may be unlawful unless clearly required by business necessity.

HEIGHT or WEIGHT?

Minimum height and weight requirements can be unlawful – unless the employer can show that a height or weight requirement is essential for job performance.

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY?

Some level of English skill may be necessary for many jobs. But, it is also clear that fluency or absence of an accent is not relevant for a substantial number of jobs.

DO YOU SMOKE or DRINK ALCOHOL

A person may not be discriminated against for using “lawful products” off the employer’s premises during non-working hours.



Capitol Update

WCCA government affairs

The 2007-08 legislative session is underway and the WCCA is well-positioned and prepared to build on the legislative success we achieved last session.

Acting on the Association’s renewed commitment to government affairs and advocacy, we were able to pass legislation to create the Cemetery Board at the department of Regulation and Licensing and establish standards for the previously unregulated cremation industry.

But this is no time to rest on our laurels.

The WCCA government affairs team is already busy at work on two pieces of very important legislation:

- 1.) A bill to require every cemetery in the state to Register with the Cemetery Board — which will help the state identify and assist problem cemeteries; and
- 2.) Final rights legislation that will recognize — in order of priority — family members and other individuals who have the ultimate authority to control the disposition of a decedent’s remains.

Of course, as the legislative session progresses, we

will actively pursue our entire legislative agenda, including a proposal to allow cemeteries to transport deceased human remains for cremation, as well as continue to educate lawmakers on why the prohibition of joint ventures between cemeteries and funeral establishments harms Wisconsin consumers.

The upcoming 2007 WCCA Lobby Day will present you with a unique opportunity to discuss these issues with your legislators and help champion the WCCA legislative agenda. We hope to see you there!

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eliminates the daily trips to the bank. The days of waiting for a few items so you could make the trip are also gone. With RDC, you can receive one check and simply scan it and make the deposit on the day it’s received.

In today’s competitive market, you need to have a banker that works with you on all aspects of your business. As technology changes, it becomes increasingly difficult to stay on top of what you may or may not need. Your bank should be your partner and provide solutions to help increase your profitability and contribute to you overall business success. This includes not only trust management, but commercial lending and treasury management solutions for the longevity of your business.

REINDERS 18TH TURF & IRRIGATION CONFERENCE
 March 14 & 15, 2007 • Waukesha Expo Center • Suburban Milwaukee, WI

Reinders is proud to present their 18th Turf & Irrigation Conference. We have been sponsoring this conference and show every other year since 1973. It has grown to become one of the largest independent shows in the country, bringing together nationally known speakers, enlightening seminars and a variety of industry manufacturers all in one place. You will find the latest research, education, equipment and products for green industry professionals.

WCCA members responsible for taking care of cemetery grounds will find the seminars and tradeshow beneficial.

Attend seminars in the following educational tracks:

- Landscaping
- Commercial Turf Care
- Commercial Irrigation
- Landscape Lighting
- Water Features

The show will have a casino theme, and we are giving away an all-expense paid trip for two to Las Vegas to one lucky customer attending the show.

For more information, call 1-800-782-3300 or visit the Reinders website at www.reinders.com.

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