



Sept. 24, 2012

Dear Subscriber:

Bob Walczyk, owner of Proko-Wall Funeral Home & Crematory in Green Bay, Wis., says he's never guaranteed prices for families that prepay, so he's never had a problem with preneed shortfalls.

"Guaranteeing would be like me going to the Chrysler dealer and telling them I want to prepay for a van that I don't want for five years, but here is the money for it at today's price," he says. Car dealers don't know what a vehicle will cost in five years, so it stands to reason that funeral homes don't know what a funeral will cost five years from now.

"I won't be the one sitting there with a preneed portfolio that's \$3 or \$4 million short," he says, noting that in some cases, a funeral home must wait much longer than five years before serving a family that prepays.

Dan Isard, founder of The Foresight Companies in Phoenix, writes in his book, "The Complete Preneed Perspective," that he "loathes" the guarantee. He adds, "I am not consumer unfriendly but rather I am pro funeral home."

The problem is compounded in states that mandate funeral homes to return excess money from prepaid contracts to consumers, Isard states. "You have a terrible math equation," he states. "On the one hand, you have a group of consumers, some with shortfalls that you can't ask for additional consideration, and on the other hand some with excesses that you can't keep or elect not to keep. It is a unilateral bad debt."

Tom Johnson, chairman of Johnson Consulting Group in Scottsdale, Ariz., also thinks guaranteeing the price of preneed contracts can be a problem. "The funeral director is hopeful that the rate of return on the trust will outperform the increased cost of a funeral," he says. "The pressure to do so creates pressure on the portfolio manager to produce high returns."

While most funeral homes continue to guarantee, what began as a murmur to reconsider the practice continues to get stronger – especially whenever the profession hears about mismanagement of preneed funds.

\$21M Preneed Shortfall Leads to Takeover of Wisconsin Association

Receiver: More than 10,500 investors are affected; probe will focus on association and fund managers

Wisconsin funeral homes must contend with the prospect of significant preneed shortfalls after the

Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions and Department of Justice discovered a shortfall of at least \$21 million in the Wisconsin Funeral Directors Association's preneed trust.

The Honorable C. William Foust, a Dane County Circuit Court judge, has appointed attorney John M. Wirth to take over the association's assets, including its Wisconsin Funeral Trust. Almost 500 funeral homes and more than 10,500 investors have preneed contracts tied to the trust.

The trust reported to the Department of Financial Institutions that as of July 31, it owed consumers more than \$69 million including their guaranteed rate of return, but it had \$48 million in its portfolio.

It's the latest blow in a series of scandals that have rocked state associations in recent years: In 2006, a \$40 million shortfall was discovered in the Illinois Funeral Directors Association's preneed trust, and more recently, a 2010 audit determined that the California Funeral Directors Association's Master Trust had a \$6 million shortfall.

"It's unbelievable when you look at the Illinois deal, the California deal and now Wisconsin," says David Nixon, owner of Nixon Consulting in Chatham, Ill. "Are they wanting to create enough problems so that nobody wants to preplan anymore?"

Tom Johnson, chairman of Johnson Consulting Group in Scottsdale, Ariz., says he's sure that the WFDA had the best of intentions when it established its preneed trust. "So did California and Illinois," he says. "The fact of the matter is that these funds cannot be invested in volatile securities of any nature. It has to be extremely conservative and risk adverse."

Wirth states that he'll seek to get as much money back for consumers as possible, but funeral homes that guarantee preneed contracts will likely have to make up the difference. Some industry pundits are already predicting future problems in other states, including Dan Isard, founder of The Foresight Companies in Phoenix. "All state associations that are managing trusts have to understand it's much more complicated than they want to make it seem," he warns.

Cause for Concern?

Michael Hull, who has advised the WFDA's preneed trust since its inception in 1999, was fired by Morgan Stanley earlier this year, the Milwaukee Journal reported.

The Journal cited federal documents that indicated Hull, a former broker and investment adviser with the Madison office of Morgan Stanley Smith Barney, was fired in April for his alleged involvement "in outside investments that were not approved by the firm."

Helping Hull manage the WFDA's preneed trust has been his brother, Patrick Hull.

SUBSCRIBER SERVICES

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Thomas A. Parmalee
Phone: 732-730-2586
tparmalee@katesboylston.com

EDITOR:

Tanya Kenevich
Phone: 732-730-2540
tkenevich@katesboylston.com

EDITOR:

Patti Martin Bartsche
Phone: 732-730-2583
pbartsche@katesboylston.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND SUBSCRIPTIONS:

1-800-500-4585 | customerservice@katesboylston.com

SITE LICENSES AND REPRINTS: It is against the law to forward this to another person. If you would like to purchase multiple subscriptions for your firm, you can do so at a reduced rate. For information, call Thomas Parmalee at 732-730-2586 or email tparmalee@katesboylston.com

COPYRIGHT WARNING: Copyright violations will be prosecuted. FSI shares 10 percent of the net proceeds of settlements or jury awards with individuals who provide essential evidence of illegal photocopying or electronic redistribution. To report violations, contact attorney Steve McVeary at 301-287-2266 or e-mail at smcveary@ucg.com.

Funeral Service Insider is published weekly 48 times a year by Kates-Boylston Publications
Two Washingtonian Center
9737 Washingtonian Blvd., Suite 200
Gaithersburg, MD 20878-7364

PRICE: \$295/year

Until the scope of the problem can be understood, the WFDA has been ordered to immediately discontinue offering its preneed trust product. Wirth says its imperative that all funeral homes in the state continue to honor preneed contracts. “I will try my hardest to get the most money back for the consumer; although it may take some time,” he says.

The probe will focus on the managers of the fund and the association. “While these policies were sold on a local basis by individual funeral homes, the questions that we need answered are association related,” Wirth says. “A large number of Wisconsin’s funeral homes are small businesses operated by families, and I have no reason to question their conduct. What *is* in question is the association operation in Madison and how the funds from these policies were managed.”

Investigator’s Findings

In an affidavit, Scott O. Conwell, an advanced securities examiner with Wisconsin’s Department of Financial Institutions, Division of Securities, details how the WFDA and the trust mismanaged money and misled member funeral directors. During the course of his investigation, Conwell spoke with Scott Peterson, WFDA’s executive director; T. Scott Gilligan, WFDA’s general counsel, other WFDA representa-

Timeline

Scott Conwell, an advanced securities examiner with the State of Wisconsin, Department of Financial Institutions, Division of Securities, details the following history of Wisconsin’s preneed trust in an affidavit:

- March 29, 1999 – The trust is conceived.
- September 2000 – The trust begins investing in instruments such as mortgage-backed securities, foreign stocks purchased through American Depository Receipts, international bonds, corporate bonds and cash not held by an FDIC insured institution. All these investments were prohibited under the trust’s own investments policy or Wisconsin law.
- By March 2002 – The trust’s portfolio includes preferred stocks, another prohibited investment.
- In or about October 2002 – The trust agreement is amended for the first time to allow for more investment options.
- 2003 – The trust introduced private equity investments, which are generally more speculative than stocks traded on an exchange. They do not have a ready market value because they are not widely traded.
- 2003 – The trust’s preneed committee approves an investment adviser recommendation to use a complex investment strategy called “municipal arbitrage trust,” which entails building a portfolio of municipal bonds while simultaneously short selling rate swaps as a hedge. “This is a type of investment strategy employed by hedge fund managers and is not typical of an investment fund with more conservative goals and parameters as the Trust has been marketed,” Conwell states.
- 2004 – The trust is amended again to name Fiduciary Partners as trustee.
- 2004 – The trust begins investing in hedge funds, which is prohibited by the trust’s investment policy and the burial trust statute.
- 2006 – The trust begins investing in fixed income alternative investments, which include instruments such as mortgage-backed securities and private placements, which are also prohibited.
- 2006 – The trust’s preneed committee grants a request by the trust’s investment advisers to invest and reinvest the trust’s funds with their own discretion without the committee’s prior approval.
- 2009 – The trust forms Requira Life Insurance Co. to underwrite burial insurance sold through the association’s member funeral homes. The trust owns 100 percent of Requira stock. “The burial insurance through Requira is offered to funeral clients as an alternative to investing in the Trust, but investors are never told that the trust formed and owns Requira,” Conwell states.

tives; and representatives from the fund's trustee, Fiduciary Partners.

In Conwell's affidavit, he states that Wisconsin law requires funeral trust funds be held in the form of a deposit with a bank or a trust company insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. or a national credit union board with similar government insurance, and that the funds must be held in trust in a separate account in the name of the depositor. "However, the Division learned that this requirement was never followed during the Trusts' existence, as the Trust funds have always held investments other than deposit accounts, and the funds of all investors are commingled in one fund and not held in separate accounts," he states.

For years, funeral directors have been told things such as: the trust provides "high, safe and secure rates of return," that it "provides a competitive rate of return by pooling funds for investment purposes," and "meets all state and federal laws," none of which was true, Conwell states.

The association also stated that the trust was approved by the Wisconsin Department of Financial Institutions – which it wasn't – and that the portfolio consisted of secure vehicles including certificates of deposit, money markets, investment grade corporate bonds and government bonds. In his affidavit, Conwell states, "Throughout the life of the Trust, its portfolio has at times contained no government bonds and almost no cash deposits."

In fact, "the trust is largely indistinguishable from a hedge fund," Conwell states, and its investment portfolio "is an aggressive, high-risk selection of investments typical of a hedge fund." He adds, "The Trust has not been registered as a security with the Division. Also, the funeral directors selling participation in the Trust have not been registered with the Division as sales agents."

Nonetheless, member funeral homes were told that the trust provided "high, safe, and secure rates of return." The WFDA provided funeral directors with all marketing and contractual materials for selling preneed contracts and procuring investments in the trust.

Conwell states in his affidavit, "The funeral directors selling participation in the Trust are provided little information concerning the Trust, do not receive any formal training to sell the preneed investments and are not licensed financial professionals."

The materials the association provides to its own members "misinform the funeral directors that the Trust complies with all state laws, has been approved by the Wisconsin Department of Financial

The Funeral Service & Cremation Alliance

The news that the Wisconsin Funeral Directors Association was taken over by a receiver caused a number of entities to distance themselves from it, including Wisconsin's other funeral director association.

The Funeral Service & Cremation Alliance of Wisconsin noted on its homepage at www.fasawisconsin.org that it has never been part of the Wisconsin Funeral Trust or any other trust program.

The FSCA states that its membership is confident that the Wisconsin Department of Justice will conduct a swift investigation and provide answers to the many questions people have.

"The FSCA stands with our fellow funeral directors in the State of Wisconsin who stay committed to serve all families with integrity and honor," the association's homepage states.

Bob Walczyk, owner of Proko-Wall Funeral Home in Green Bay, is a member of the FSCA, and he says that the preneed trust problems at WFDA have been a hot topic of discussion among its members. "We are all getting phone calls, and people are asking if their money is safe," he says. "At this point, I'm comfortable saying it is because I have it invested in something else."

While Walczyk is happy that members of his association aren't affected by the current situation, he is worried about how events affect funeral service at large – especially in Wisconsin. "Overall, it's a wide brush, and the public can very easily say, 'There's the funeral home again; they took our money and took it to benefit themselves instead of the consumer.' And that's the sad part," he says.

Institutions and that the rate of return is set at 1 percent over the rate of the Wisconsin average of 3-year CDs,” he states. He explains later, “The crediting rate has been consistently set in excess of 1 percent over the CD rate irrespective of whether the Trust had sufficient funds to pay all of its investors as promised. The Trust investors are never informed of the actual crediting rate or the fact that the rate does not reflect the actual return of the Trust.”

Conwell ultimately concludes, “By continuing to pay benefits at the putative ‘guaranteed’ rate while the Trust assets in actuality have declined in value, the Trust is operating in some ways like a Ponzi scheme.”

Funeral Professionals Respond

The fact that history seems to be repeating itself in state after state alarms Nixon, who says he was “practically dumbfounded” when he heard about the news.

Steve Lang, chief operating officer for Homesteaders Life Co. in Des Moines, Iowa, states in a news release, “We are always saddened to hear any news that might diminish the value of funeral service in any way. Funeral providers throughout the nation and in Wisconsin have a strong tradition of providing the very best in customer service to the families they serve, and we expect that despite this report that tradition will continue.” He adds, “We hope that a solution can be attained with little compromise to consumer trust in prearranging and prefunding future funerals with their local providers.”

In coming weeks and months, it will be interesting to find out who knew what and when, Nixon says. Before problems in Illinois became public, the state association had received three cease and desist letters asking it to stop promoting its preneed trust, but it thumbed its nose at authorities each time, Nixon says. “Somebody dropped the ball, and the trust basically lost a third of its value, which seems very similar to what’s happened here (in Wisconsin),” he says.

While the latest debacle may not ultimately reach the same monetary damages as those suffered in Illinois, Nixon thinks that on some levels, it’s worse because the managers of the Wisconsin association had fair warning about what could happen and failed to act. “When you look at it from the perspective of what did we learn from the past, this has to top the other two because they knew what could happen!” Nixon exclaims.

Associations promoting risky and even illegal investments to their members must take on a large portion of blame, but Nixon says that individual funeral homes must be more proactive when evaluating where to put money. “I remember specifically telling people through the *Insider* when the Illinois mess was coming apart that they needed to know what is going on with preneed funds – whether it’s with their state association or whatever it is,” he says. “You need to know the riskiness of the investments and the details.”

Isard says state associations are getting in trouble because they are outsourcing everything and don’t really understand the investing world. While he’s particularly worried about the affected firms that guarantee price, he adds, “there’s no good argument I’ve seen in favor of guaranteeing, but this is not an

TIP

Ask for the copy of the latest audit of your association’s trust.

That’s the advice from David Nixon, owner of Nixon Consulting in Chatham, Ill. “All too often – as we saw in the Illinois association – we are told that it’s not our business,” Nixon says.

The lesson that funeral home owners must take from this latest preneed scandal is that they simply must be active and involved when evaluating where to put preneed money. “You can’t delegate responsibility for something of this magnitude,” Nixon says.

Conwell states in his affidavit that the executive director of WFDA, Scott Peterson, told him that association members frequently asked about the portfolio of the trust, but they received only general information about the investment performance.

It’s clear that Nixon doesn’t want funeral homes to be satisfied with “general information.”

argument against it – it’s an argument against state associations being in the trust business without having competent investments advisers and trust administrators who know what they are doing and are not subject to the politics or whims of an ever-rotating funeral board.”

NFDA Issues Comments

Christine Pepper, CEO of the National Funeral Directors Association in Brookfield, Wis., says that she’s aware of the situation involving the Wisconsin Funeral Directors Association, but she notes that state associations are independently governed and operated.

“If a state has not done so already, funeral directors should work with their state association to urge their state government to adopt or amend their preneed laws so that they meet or exceed the standards outlined in NFDA’s Model Consumer Protection Guidelines for State Preneed Funeral Statutes,” she says.

Pepper notes that in late 2008, NFDA released two documents for its members: “Guidelines for Evaluating Preneed Trusts” and “Guidelines for Evaluating Preneed Insurers.” She adds, “The guidelines for evaluating preneed trusts suggest that funeral directors ask trust administrators for detailed information about the trust and its operations, its management history and current performance and business practices. We recommend that members download these documents available at www.nfda.org/legal-forms, to evaluate all methods of prepayment they offer to families, be it a product available through an association or some other entity.”

While some question whether repeated headlines involving preneed problems might harm funeral professionals, Pepper says faith in funeral directors remains high. “National surveys and the anecdotal experiences of our members show that consumers have faith in the local funeral directors who serve them in a time of need and who are a positive presence in the community,” she says. “According to the results of the 2010 Funeral and Memorialization Council consumer survey, 95 percent of respondents thought that funeral professionals took special care to make sure the ceremony and arrangements reflected the family’s wishes; 89 percent thought that people in the profession were professional and competent.”

Pepper adds, “Funeral directors are the trusted leaders in their community, serving the dying, the dead and the bereaved with care and compassion. Funeral directors can continue to maintain their reputation

Trust or Insurance?

Graham Cook, chairman-president of Homesteaders Life Co. in Des Moines, Iowa, says problems in Wisconsin should not be dulled down into an anti-trust message. “We need to be careful in viewing trust as a categorically faulty mechanism for funding advance funeral plans – it is not,” he says in a news release. “Rather, it is the manner in which funds are invested that is the culprit, in the two recent cases in which state association trusts have faced shortfalls.”

However, Gerry Kraus, vice president of compliance for Homesteaders, adds, “With the high level of regulatory oversight on insurers, life insurance clearly emerges as not only the funding alternative most preferred by funeral regulators, it is also without equal the most secure means for preneed funding.”

National Guardian Life Insurance Co. in Madison, Wis., issued a statement that said neither it or its preneed insurance policies are in any way affected by the situation with the Wisconsin trust.

NGL reminded people about some differences between trust-funded preneed and insurance-funded preneed, including:

- Insurance companies and their products are subject to comprehensive and strict insurance regulation in every state.
- Insurance companies are required to hold not only conservative reserves for future claims but additional surplus to ensure the ability to pay claims.
- The financial security of insurance companies is evaluated by rating agencies.

“We do not like to see problems occur with any aspect of the funeral industry, regardless of how distant from NGL,” the company stated.

in the community by continually exhibiting the highest standard of integrity in all matters pertaining to prefunding funerals.”

Moving Forward

In the weeks and months ahead, funeral homes in Wisconsin can expect an uncertain and, at times, hostile landscape, Nixon predicts. “I suspect at least one or more state legislators are going to get involved,” he says. “There will be investigations, and there could be FBI involvement. Reams of information will have to be produced for investigations, and the attorney general might get involved.”

The public may also be unforgiving, Nixon says. “Any anti-funeral organization is just going to jump all over this as further evidence that you have a group of funeral directors who are not investment people making investment decisions, and whether they chose the portfolio or chose a recommended portfolio, that is really immaterial, isn’t it?”

Funeral home owners need to rethink on a large scale the best way to handle preneed, Isard contends. “It’s not to say that trust is bad or insurance is good ... that’s not the point,” he says. “We just have to realize that if we are going to make a commitment to be in the financial services business, which is what we are doing, then we have to be prepared to run this money as if we are a bona fide professional financial services company.”

For funeral homes in other states relying on their state associations, Isard hopes they take time to really understand where they are putting their money. “I’m absolutely certain this is going to repeat,” he says. “It probably exists right now in other states; it’s just the auditors aren’t savvy enough to understand what they are auditing.”

Wisconsin Funeral Director Services

Two years before the Wisconsin Funeral Directors Association started Requia Life Insurance Co. (which is owned by its preneed trust), it formed Wisconsin Funeral Director Services, a for-profit corporation wholly owned by the WFDA that provides services to the trust.

Scott O. Conwell, an advanced securities examiner with the State of Wisconsin, Department of Financial Institutions, Division of Securities, outlines the relationship between WFDA, its trust and Wisconsin Funeral Director Services in an affidavit. He states, “Although Requia is supposed to be wholly-owned by the Trust, it and the Trust each pay a separate royalty to the service company for the use of the WFDA’s name, logo, and membership mailing list. Since the WFDA already owns the Trust, which in turn owns Requia, the WFDA is paying itself with investor funds for the use of its own name and trademarks. The WFDA also receives management fees from the Trust. The association reported to the Division that the Trust paid out \$460,632 to the WFDA and the service company in the fiscal years ending March 2010 and March 2011. None of these fees were disclosed to investors.”

Business Plan Conference Offers CEUs to Funeral Professionals

Funeral professionals throughout the country are headed to Charleston, S.C., for the Seventh Annual Funeral Service Business Plan Conference, Nov. 8-9, which offers continuing education credits for practitioners from most states. (Visit www.katesboylston.com/bizplan to learn more.)

The Academy of Professional Funeral Service Practice approved the conference for 13 hours of continuing education. Several states that don’t automatically accept Academy approval have already reviewed the program’s agenda and approved it for continuing education purposes. The following states have all approved the program for 13 hours of continuing education: Ohio, Kentucky, South Carolina, New Jersey, Illinois and Indiana. Tennessee approved the conference for 10 hours of continuing education, and Kansas approved the program for 6 hours of continuing education. Other states are currently reviewing the program and are expected to issue continuing education approval soon. These states include Georgia, Florida, North Carolina and New York.

The Latest News Headlines from Throughout Funeral Service

It's been another busy week or two for funeral service. Here are some of the latest headlines you might have missed ...

Hillenbrand Reports the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Denies Class Certification

The United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit affirmed the denial of class certification in the previously disclosed lawsuit filed by the Funeral Consumers Alliance and a number of individual consumer casket purchasers against Batesville and its former parent company, Hillenbrand Industries, now Hill-Rom Holdings, Inc., and three national funeral home businesses, according to a Hillenbrand press release. The plaintiffs' claim for attorney fees was remanded back to the District Court.

The FCA had sought class certification in a lawsuit alleging that Batesville Casket Co. and its three named customers had violated antitrust laws by Batesville limiting the sale of its Batesville Caskets to licensed funeral homes. A U.S. District Court judge for the Southern District of Texas denied class certification on March 26, 2009, and the appellate court denied the subsequent petition for appeal on June 19, 2009.

Following the denial of class certification, the plaintiffs pursued claims for individual defendants, and those claims were ultimately dismissed by the District Court in their entirety on Sept. 24, 2010. Following dismissal of the lawsuit, the plaintiffs appealed the overall dismissal and the earlier denial of class certification to the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. The recent ruling from the Fifth Circuit once again denied the certification of a class.

"We have prevailed at every step of the way with regard to class action, and are very pleased this matter was upheld once again by the courts," said Kenneth A. Camp, Hillenbrand's president and CEO. "For more than a century, our policy of selling caskets to licensed funeral directors operating licensed funeral homes has helped to ensure families receive quality products and services when they choose a Batesville casket."

Assurant Solutions Names President of Preneed Business

Specialty insurer Assurant Solutions has appointed Tammy Schultz as president of its preneed insurance business, according to a news release.

In her new role, Schultz is responsible for maintaining and growing the preneed business through its relationship with funeral industry partners. Schultz will also serve as executive vice president of Assurant Solutions, working alongside leaders of the company's extended service and debt protection businesses to strengthen relationships with consumers and client partnerships, grow the business for the future and build the company's brand.

"Tammy joined our preneed business in 1995, handling roles that range from marketing to sales to customer service," said Craig Lemasters, chief executive officer of Assurant Solutions. "In this business, relationships are key. Tammy has the unique ability to connect with industry professionals, clients, customers and employees on a personal level, always with an eye to carrying the business forward."

Prior to this appointment, Schultz served as vice president, client relationships, as well as vice president, chief operations officer of the Preneed business where she improved efficiencies, strengthened key business partnerships and helped make a positive impact on employee job satisfaction. She earned her bachelor's degree in journalism and advertising from South Dakota State University and achieved her Fellow Life Management Institute designation in March 2002.

Chicago Firm Agrees to Settle FTC Charges for Funeral Rule Violations

A Chicago funeral home operator has agreed to settle Federal Trade Commission charges that he violated the Funeral Rule, which helps to ensure that people have the information they need to compare prices and buy only the funeral services and goods they want, the FTC announced in a news release.

In July 2011, at the FTC's request, the U.S. Department of Justice charged Harry J. Carter III, doing business as Carter Funeral Chapels Ltd. of Chicago, with not providing consumers with itemized price lists, as required by the Funeral Rule. The complaint was based on inspections by FTC staff posing as consumers seeking to make funeral arrangements.

Under the consent order, the defendant is permanently prohibited from violating the Funeral Rule. The order also imposes a \$64,000 civil penalty, which will be suspended due to the defendant's inability to pay. The full judgment will become due immediately if the defendant is found to have misrepresented his financial condition. This consent decree is for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by the defendants that the law has been violated.

Jeffrey Shapiro Appointed Interim President of CCMS

The Cincinnati College of Mortuary Science has announced the appointment of Jeffrey A. Shapiro as interim president, according to a news release.

A graduate of Rutgers University and the Wharton Graduate School, University of Pennsylvania, Mr. Shapiro first worked with the City of Philadelphia before embarking on assignments as a city manager in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania communities.

Shapiro has served 40 years in the field of education administration and not-for-profit management. His career has spanned senior administrative and finance work with both major universities and smaller colleges. Not-for-profit organizations included major government contractors, research organizations and other education related organizations.

Most recently, Shapiro served as the vice president of administrative services at a small community college in New York, and before that worked as a senior financial and administrative director of the development and operation of the Biomedical Graduate Research Organization at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

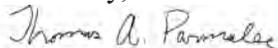
Aurora Partners With Cooper Caskets & Funeral Supplies

Aurora Casket Co. has announced a strategic partnership with Cooper Caskets & Funeral Supplies to sell Aurora caskets to funeral homes in New Jersey, Delaware, and parts of Pennsylvania and Maryland, according to a news release.

Cooper Caskets & Funeral Supplies is part of Cooper Vault Co., a leading supplier of burial products in the mid-Atlantic region for more than 32 years.

"Aurora's reputation for quality and service is well known," said Beth Cooper, vice president at Cooper Vault Co. "We share a commitment to the funeral profession and the families that they serve, so partnering with Aurora to bring new solutions to our customers was the perfect fit."

Sincerely,



Thomas A. Parmalee, Editor
tparmalee@katesboylston.com

A Webinar for Funeral Professionals

Noncompete Agreements: What You Need To Know

You don't need to scramble to figure out what you can do lawfully to prevent employees from skipping out the door with your client lists, proprietary files and business strategies in hand.

JOIN us on December 11, for this practical 60-minute webinar, as we discuss the best practices for noncompete agreements to safeguard your business and prevent unfair competition from your current and former employees.

You'll Walk Away Knowing:

- ✓ Key provisions to include in your noncompete agreement
- ✓ How to draft noncompete agreements that stand up in court
- ✓ How to avoid huge noncompete loopholes
- ✓ What to do when an employee departs
- ✓ The best legal strategies to take when a competitor hires a former employee
- ✓ And much more!

Date: December 11, 2012

Time: 3 p.m. (EST)

Cost: \$99

www.katesboylston.com/webinars

Interested, but can't attend? Register anyway and we'll send you a recording within two weeks of the original airdate.

About the Speakers:

Dan Isard, president of The Foresight Companies in Phoenix, a company that provides business consulting services to funeral home owners and ceterians.

Harvey I. Lapin, an attorney with Sachs Sax Caplan in Boca Raton, Fla. Lapin specializes in the mortuary, crematory, cemetery, tax and corporation legal areas.

PLUS, you'll have an opportunity to get answers to your specific noncompete questions during the live Q&A.

Simply complete the order form and return with your payment.

NAME _____ TITLE _____

EMAIL _____ @ _____

Company Information:

COMPANY _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____ FAX _____

BUSINESS CATEGORY: Funeral Home (16) Cemetery (05) Crematory (08) Funeral Home & Crematory (13)
 Cemetery & Crematory (11) Mortuary School (14) Industry Supplier (15) Other (12)

Method of Payment:

Please Charge My: Visa Amex Mastercard

Bill Me Later

Card Number: _____

Check or money order enclosed
(Make check payable to Kates-Boylston)

Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

SIGN ME UP

✓ \$99

4 WAYS TO ORDER

Web: www.katesboylston.com/webinars

Fax: 732-730-2515

Call: 800-500-4585 (option 1)

Mail: American Funeral Director A2302
3349 Highway 138
Building D, Suite D
Wall, NJ 07719

CODE: A2302