

# CEMETERIAN

Preserving Legacies. Advancing the Cemeterian's Experience.

JULY 2011

## DOCUMENTING YOUR ASSETS



*Kevin Wolfe*

*CAC President 2010/11*

July is a great month to tend to maintenance details throughout the cemetery. I have personally found it useful to take a clip board out onto the grounds to survey and document maintenance issues, including gardens, fencing, buildings, monuments, and importantly, entrances and public areas within the cemetery.

As visitors enter your cemetery it is important that you leave a good lasting impression. Pay special attention to gardens, grassy areas, flag poles, statuary and signage. In the Best Practices section of this issue, we detail specifics that will help you to showcase your cemetery with pride.

This is also a good time to take your staff onto the grounds and to hold walking tours with them. Your staff are your advocates to the community and to the families you serve. The more they know about the essence of your property, the more they will have to share with families who will enjoy learning about the history and pedigree of your cemetery.

I also encourage you to pay close attention to your evergreen trees. It is true that the Pine Beetle is now affecting the Front Range and communities are now experiencing the parasite issue in urban areas. Check with your local arborist or municipal forester for advice on preventing the spread of the Pine Beetle kill in your cemetery.

The quiet months of mid-summer are also a perfect time to audit your grounds to create baseline documentation of your assets. You might be surprised at the treasures held within your grounds that can provide great opportunities for community engagement.

**Horticulture** - Creating a baseline documentation of your horticulture is an ideal way to identify tree species, as well as the condition of trees, especially those that may be affected with disease or in need of crowning or trimming due to wind, age, lightening strikes, or abnormal growth. You may use this document to create a maintenance schedule for your grounds personnel, which allows them to systematically tend to high-risk trees to ensure the safety of all who visit the cemetery. In many cemeteries, trees may be hundreds of years old and their root systems may be affecting surrounding headstones and monuments. Be sure to contact a professional arborist before you make arrangements to fix "falling" or "partially buried" headstones or monuments at tree bases as the roots actually become organic with the stones and damage to these root systems may result in serious damage to the tree.

**Monuments** - The monuments that dot our cemeteries also document the history of your community. They represent a myriad of architectural styles and articulate cultural nuances. Documenting monuments of notables that are buried within the cemetery, architectural styles, cultural and fraternal monuments and their stone compositions, can be used to create an interesting walking tours for visitors.

**Historic Structures** - Many cemeteries are home to historic structures that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Identify any of your structures that are listed on the National Register and document the date and information that led to its listing, and be sure to place a plaque on or near the structure to let visitors know of its important stature.

# WHAT'S NEW NOW!

**Historic Structures Cont.** - Did you know that you can also achieve a Historic District designation from the National Register of Historic Places for specific blocks within your cemetery? If you can document and demonstrate historical relevance through horticulture, statuary, monuments, and burial sites that meet the Register's strict criteria, you may achieve this distinctive status for an area within your cemetery. Contact CAC to learn more about this opportunity.

**Art** - Many cemeteries are home to unique statuary and art collections, such as stained glass. Documenting these assets provide you with knowledge of these unique gems and is another opportunity to share these interesting features with families and the community.

**Special Garden Areas** - Serving the differing requests and needs of various cultural groups within your community allow you to touch these groups with relevance and meaning. Documenting garden areas that reflect social, cultural and municipal memorials demonstrate your commitment to serving and preserving the essence and legacies of a range of organizations and communal groups.

**Putting the Documentation to Work** - A meaningful way to engage your staff is to solicit champions for documenting the assets within the cemetery. They will become advocates for the areas and may serve as tour guides and section experts for these areas within the cemetery for both peers and families.

**Educating your staff** about the various aspects of your cemetery is important to their knowledge and ability to articulate the value and essence of your cemetery to families who are in your care - or those who are considering your location as a burial and life celebration option. The more staff know, the more they can engage families and cultivate a sense of engagement - simply by sharing the information about your cemetery assets.

*Watch for future articles in CAC Cemeterian relating to asset documentation and programs that may be developed as a result of understanding more about the composition of your location.*



## SUPPORT CAC!

**PURCHASE YOUR COPIES OF THE  
NEW CAC 2011/12 CALENDAR!**

THE 18-MONTH CALENDAR  
HIGHLIGHTS CAC MEMBER LOCATIONS  
FEATURING THE ESSENCE OF THEIR CEMETERIES!

WATCH FOR OUR EMAIL THE FIRST WEEK IN AUGUST  
FOR PRICING AND ORDERING INFORMATION.

CALENDARS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR  
PURCHASE AT THE CAC/CFDA CONVENTION  
IN SEPTEMBER!

PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF THE CALENDAR SUPPORT  
THE CAC LEGACY MEMORIAL PHILANTHROPY FUND.

# CAC BEST PRACTICES

## PESTICIDE APPLICATION

There are many issues that face our landscapes and certain climate conditions can cause infestations to plant materials and trees. Depending on your location, you will want to be on the lookout for changes in your horticulture that can affect the overall health of your cemetery grounds.

Routine inspection of your cemetery landscapes will determine the need to implement pest control. Scheduled preventive pesticide application to cemetery grounds can help to reduce, and in many instances, alleviate pests.

There are several resources available that provide detailed information regarding effective pest control and preventive maintenance that will ensure that you are protecting your landscapes. Among these options are new methods and products that are “greener” in nature. Whatever choices you make on behalf of your maintenance program, you also need to ensure the safety of your staff and visitors. **Clearly identifying areas that have been treated will alleviate the chances of someone being exposed to chemicals during the applicaiton cycle.**

Many cemeteries choose to retain grounds services that routinely provide services to ensure that scheduled maintenance takes place in a timely manner. These resource services are also a great resource for learning about infestations and pests that may be impacting trees or foliage in your area, such as the Black Walnut tree fungus that has devastated a vast majority of the trees along Colorado’s urban corridor the past several years.

The Pine Beetle has also reached the Front Range. If your cemetery has evergreen trees it would be to your advantage to contact an arborist or your local municipality forester to assess the condition of your trees and inspect for signs of infestation. Early treatment may be available and in some cases, and removing the infected tree(s) may help to ensure the health of remaining trees within the cemetery.

For more information regarding pesticide applications and other maintenance resources, contact the **Green Industries of Colorado** (GreenCO), an organization that publishes reports based on research and best practices in the state. **[www.lawncarecolorado.org](http://www.lawncarecolorado.org)** is another solid resource for cemetery maintenance.

**Watch for more resources to help your cemetery thrive in coming issues of CAC Cemeteries Best Practices articles.**

## MAINTENANCE AND YOUR CEMETERY'S IMAGE

### STAGING FOR SUCCESS

**The visual image your cemetery projects can be as important as the service families and visitors experience while they are at your cemetery. The following tips will help you focus your efforts to create a cemetery that leaves a lasting positive image within your community.**

#### **Welcome: The Front Gate**

Your cemetery signage should be cleaned often and if it is a painted surface, or a stone or metal composition, be sure it is clean and legible. Keep trees and bushes trimmed so your sign is visible. Check lighting that may shine on the sign at night to be sure it is working.

#### **Grassy Areas and Entry Gardens**

There is an expectation that lawns at a cemetery should be green and well kept. Maintain grassy areas near your entrance and main building(s). Pull weeds, trim and blow cuttings and dirt from gutters, and maintain garden material by clearing out dead flowers and cutting back bushes and perineals that grow too large.

#### **Flagpoles and Entry Structures**

If you have a flag pole or entry structure, such as an informational kiosk, frequently wash the exterior and keep windows clean. Maintain the grounds at the base of the flagpole and around the structure. Check your flag to ensure that it is not torn, faded or frayed. Keeping these entry icons sharp and well maintained will set an expectation for how you manage your entire cemetery.

#### **Parking Areas**

Keep trash, leaves, dirt, etc. cleaned daily from these areas. Fix potholes immediately and maintain lighting, grassy areas and flower gardens. These areas are visited frequently during the course of preparing for funerals and while family and friends are visiting departed loved ones.

#### **Staff**

Remind staff that common areas such as the parking lot are just that, common areas, visited by families, cemetery partners and other employees. Conversations between staff should not take place in the parking lot, and the parking lot should not be a designated smoking area during breaks.

**Remember, as a cemeterian, it is up to you to set the standard for the visual beauty and experience of your location.** These small tasks will make a big difference in creating and maintaining a positive, quality image for your location.



COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF CEMETERIES

# COMING UP NEXT

## August Issue

### CAC Updates

### Best Practices: Cemetery Irrigation

## Contact Us

### Colorado Association of Cemeteries

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Pagosa Springs, CO 81147-7214

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[www.coloradocemeteries.org](http://www.coloradocemeteries.org)

### Board Members

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### CAC CEMETERIAN

Editor: Adrienne Thiele Dallagiacoma

*If you have topics you would like to see addressed in future issues of CAC CEMETERIAN please email Adrienne Dallagiacoma at [athiele@ulicreative.com](mailto:athiele@ulicreative.com)*

*CAC CEMETERIAN is a monthly publication of the Colorado Association of Cemeteries, an organization dedicated to preserving legacies and advancing the cemeterian's experience.*

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

## SEPTEMBER

### CAC/CFDA Combined Convention September 7, 8, 9

Marriott Hotel Lone Tree

10345 Park Meadows Drive, Lone Tree, CO 80214

### Convention Highlights:

#### Karl Mecklenburg Keynote Thursday, Sept. 8, 8:30 - 10 AM

#### CAC Business Meeting Lone Tree Room Thursday, Sept. 8, 12:45 - 1:30 PM

Learn about new CAC programs and services!

#### "Xeriscaping the Afterlife" Friday, Sept. 9, 10:30 AM - Noon

Learn how to enhance your collections so they can provide greater education, leadership and inspiration as showcases of horticultural best practices. Presented by Panayoti Kelaidis, Senior Curator and Director of Outreach at Denver Botanic Gardens, one of the architects of the Xeriscape movement.

Additional program topics include:

OSHA Training

Cemetery Security & Loss Prevention

Human Resource Issues

For more information and details on the convention,  
visit our website at

[www.coloradocemeteries.org/events](http://www.coloradocemeteries.org/events)