Legislative Update

Source: Michael Triplett - IFDA Lobbyist

Reps. Rob Bacon (R-Slater) and Vicki Lensing (D-Iowa City) on Wednesday convened a small group of IFDA and Iowa Donor Network staffs to walk through some concerns that funeral directors have raised on the interactions that organizations like the IDN and the Iowa Lions Eye Bank have with grieving families. As funeral directors, we hear first-hand from families when they feel pressured to make a donation, for example. IFDA believes that the organ procurement organizations should have consistent protocols on how often they can make contact with a grieving family, and that “No means No” should settle the question on whether the family wants to make a donation on behalf of a deceased loved one. We will continue to work with the organ procurement organizations and interested legislators on these protocols on behalf of the families we serve.

The House and Senate were active this week, debating bills on the floor and getting them ready for further discussion in the other chamber. The Senate was particularly busy, passing 44 bills on Tuesday and Wednesday alone.

SF 335, the bill to allow the IDN access to autopsy reports, passed out of a House subcommittee on Thursday with language from the Office of the State Medical Examiner further clarifying the situations when the reports would be available. It will likely be brought up in the House Human Resources committee next week. IFDA is neutral on the bill.
At the 135th IFDA Annual Convention, IFDA will feature Santiago Jaramillo who is the CEO and Founder of Bluebridge, the company that pioneered the Mobile-Apps-as-a-Service Industry. Santiago will be presenting two sessions that pertain to you and your business.

On Wednesday, May 13, at 10 AM, in Hilton Coliseum, Santiago will present, “Why your Funeral Home MUST have a Mobile Presence.” In this session, Santiago will explain the importance of a mobile presence in today’s marketplace. He’ll share some current research and statistics as well as explain the different ways funeral homes can build a mobile presence. He’ll also provide some first steps you can take to start going mobile.

Later on Wednesday at 6:30 PM at the Gateway Hotel, Santiago will present “Online Engagement: Tech Terms and Tools Made Easy.” During this presentation, Santiago will cover a variety of technology terms and tools funeral directors can use to increase knowledge and boost productivity. Specifically, the goals of the session are:

- Develop an understanding of technology trends affecting the industry
- Become familiar with important technology terms
- Learn how to implement new technology tools into your business

IFDA is fortunate to have Santiago present at this year’s Convention. Santiago is a nationally-recognized expert on mobile thought and innovation. He has been selected for Inc. Magazine’s “30 Under 30,” has been a guest at the White House for the Champions of Change initiative, and has received several awards that honor entrepreneurs, business leaders and start-up founders.

Audiences who hear Santiago speak can expect to walk away with valuable, actionable knowledge about today’s mobile landscape.

IFDA Will Be Represented at “Vision for the Future” Meeting

IFDA Executive Director Suzanne M. Gebel, CAE is one of 35 funeral service leaders invited to be a part of “Vision for the Future” meetings of the National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA).

“As an influential leader, we would be honored if you would participate in this important meeting that will helps shape NFDA for decades to come,” said NFDA President Rob Moore. “You were specifically chosen because you are seen as a thought leader in the profession, have the ability to see the big picture, and will bring a broad perspective to this national conversation.”

For more than 100 years, NFDA operated under the governance structure first established in 1882. In the early 1990s, with new market forces bearing down on the profession, NFDA charted a new course, envisioning a future in which the association’s governing bodies would be able to make fast, informed decisions, with input from all state associations throughout the year. Over the course of the next ten years NFDA implemented changes in its mission, structure and operations designed to help the association maintain its leadership position in funeral service.

The results of a governance audit, which were discussed during NFDA’s 2010 Leadership Conference, provided new insights into the strengths and weaknesses of our current structure.

“As a result of the audit, some changes were made and implemented,” Moore said. “As the landscape of funeral service continues to evolve; it’s now time to look at the big picture.”

The meetings are designed to proactively examine NFDA’s governance structure to determine whether it is effectively and efficiently designed to support the association’s mission and vision for the future of funeral service.

“I’m honored and grateful for this opportunity to represent IFDA for this national discussion about the future of NFDA’s governance,” Gebel said. “The IFDA Board of Governors and I work very hard to make sure that Iowa is a well-respected funeral service leader.”

The professionally-facilitated meeting will be held April 27-29 in Indianapolis, Indiana.
The 135th IFDA Annual Convention will be the last one in Ames for at least two years. For 2016 and 2017, IFDA will hold the Convention at Prairie Meadows Convention Center in Altoona.

Since this is the last year in Ames, there are a few places unique-to Ames you might want to make sure you visit (or revisit) for a good meal while you’re in Ames this May:

+39 Restaurant, Market & Cantina, Authentic Italian Restaurant - 2640 Stange Road in Ames.
+39 is an authentic Italian restaurant with a European-style market, spacious patio, and vast Cantina with over 150 Italian wine labels.

Aunt Maude’s - 547 Main Street in Ames
A locally-owned casual restaurant. Fresh house- made food, full bar and wine list, serving lunch and dinner. Patio seating and private dining available.

Brick City Grill – 2704 Stange Road in Ames
Ames’ newest sports bar and family dining destination. Home of the award-winning “Best Burger in Iowa”

Café Beaudelaire – 254 Lincoln Way in Ames
A locally-owned restaurant that features Brazilian fusion cuisine, a full bar and a unique atmosphere in the heart of Campustown.

Dublin Bay Irish Pub and Grill - 320 S. 16th Street in Ames
Wonderfully unique menu. Full-service pub with 16 beers on tap and Irish hospitality. There are no strangers here – just friends whom you haven’t met yet!

Fuji Japanese Steakhouse – 1614 S. Kellogg Avenue in Ames
Enjoy delicious Japanese food before your eyes “hibachi-style,” or enjoy a variety of fresh selections from the sushi bar.

Ge-Angelo’s Italian Restaurant – 823 Wheeler Street in Ames
Proudly serving hand-stretched pizzas, pastas, homemade sauces, salads and sandwiches in a relaxing atmosphere. Try Ge-Angelo’s for a “Touch of Italy.”

Great Plains Sauce & Dough Co. – 123 Main Street in Ames
A classic Ames pizza shop offering six different pizza styles; including whole wheat, oat, and potato crusts. If you have an adventurous spirit, this pizza is for you!

Hickory Park – 1404 S. Duff Avenue in Ames
An Ames tradition since 1970, Hickory Park is famous for their hickory smoked selections, ice cream parlor desserts, generous portions, modes prices, and exceptional service.

La Feuente Mexican Restaurant – 217 S. Duff Avenue in Ames
Best Mexican food and margaritas in town. Voted “Best Mexican Food in Story County.”

Oddfellows Burger Kitchen – 823 Wheeler Street in Ames
Oddfellows is a fun and funky, made-from-scratch restaurant and lounge in North Ames. They feature fresh ground hamburgers with homemade buns.

Olde Main Brewing Company – 316 Main Street in Ames
Locally-owned restaurant and brewery featuring handcrafted entrees, fresh brewed beer and root beer.

Open Flame Steak & Lounge – 225 Main Street in Gilbert
Best beef in Iowa. Grill your own or they will do it. Indoor and outdoor dining available. Located in Gilbert – just north of Ames.

Pizza Pit – 207 Welch Avenue in Ames
Pizza, hot sandwiches, chicken wings, appetizers, cold pop. Located in Campustown.

The Café – 2616 Northridge Parkway in Ames
Fun, energetic café featuring local and seasonal menus with Artisan-style breads, European pastries and creative desserts. Serving breakfast, lunch and dinner.

The Spice – 402 Main Street in Ames
The Spice offers authentic Thai cuisine in a stylish, sophisticated and relaxed environment.

Wallaby’s Bar & Grille – 2733 Stange Road in Ames
Ames’ only rooftop patio. Voted “Ames’ Best Sports Bar!” (New location) •
Ruling in NPS Civil Case: $490 Million

Earlier this month a jury has awarded $490 million to state life and health guarantee associates and a receiver in the civil trial surrounding the massive $600 million National Prearranged Services Inc. prepaid funeral scheme.

PNC Bank, a successor to Allegiant Bank, was the defendant. Shaun Hayes’ Allegiant was a trustee for National Prearranged from 1998 to 2004. Hayes sold Allegiant to National City, which was later sold to PNC Bank.

The jury’s verdict said PNC Bank must pay $355 million in compensatory damages and $35.5 million in punitive damages, according to Betty Ann Skrien, judicial assistant in U.S. District Judge Richard Webber’s court. It also ruled that Forever Enterprises, which is now defunct and was controlled by the Cassitys, must pay $100 million.

The plaintiffs — insurance guarantee associations that were forced to cover victims’ losses from the scheme and a receiver tasked with wrapping National Prearranged — had argued that Allegiant was negligent because it did not question why National Prearranged was replacing trustees who questioned its business, among other things.

Six officers and employees related to National Prearranged, including James “Doug” Cassity and his son Brent Cassity, were sentenced to prison time in November 2013 for their roles in the scheme, which produced one of the biggest trials the city of St. Louis had seen since the days of the mob.

National Prearranged promised customers money they paid for prearranged funerals would be held in a trust, and claims were to be funded by the trust. But the defendants in the criminal case spent the trust money, and money from new clients was used to pay claims.

The defendants in the criminal case were ordered to pay more than $445 million in restitution.

Source: St. Louis Business Journal – March 9, 2015

IFDA Logo Available for Your Website and Other Materials

Do you proudly display the IFDA logo in your funeral home’s marketing materials, on your website or on signage around your funeral home?

To obtain the IFDA logo from the IFDA website, click here and log into the website. There, you will find color and black & white versions of the IFDA logo for your use.

If you need assistance downloading the IFDA logo, call IFDA at 800.982.6561 •