



From the MFDA Board

As you will see, this month's newsletter is a bit of a mixture of updates, announcements, reminders, and information from across the Association. In many ways, that reflects the work of the MFDA itself, a steady mix of advocacy, education, communication, problem solving, and member support happening behind the scenes throughout the year.

This month's newsletter also includes a particularly meaningful article reflecting on the funeral honors provided for Maine Game Warden Pilot Joshua Tibbetts. The article highlights not only the professionalism involved in coordinating a service of this magnitude, but also the cooperation and fellowship that exists among funeral professionals across Maine. Funeral homes from multiple communities worked together with a shared purpose, serving a family and community with dignity, compassion, and respect.

Moments like this serve as an important reminder that funeral service is bigger than any one individual funeral home or business. While we may serve different communities and operate independently, there remains a strong sense of professional responsibility and mutual support within this profession when families and communities need us most. That spirit of cooperation and willingness to stand beside one another is one of the strengths of funeral service in Maine and one of the values of belonging to an active professional association.

One exciting project currently underway is the development of our updated MFDA website, including a new Members Only section that we will soon be rolling out. Our goal is to create a space that provides meaningful value to members and becomes a useful professional resource, not simply another password-protected page.

As we begin building this section, we want to hear directly from you. What information, resources, forms, tools, updates, or member benefits would you find

valuable? What would make you log in and use it regularly? Your feedback will help shape both the website and future member services.

More importantly, we continue to encourage members to share ideas, concerns, challenges, and topics they would like the Association to focus on. The MFDA is strongest when it reflects the needs and priorities of the professionals it represents. Your involvement and input help guide the direction of the Association and ensure that we continue to remain relevant, practical, and effective for funeral professionals across Maine.

Thank you for your continued support and participation in the MFDA.

— *The MFDA Board of Directors*

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Member News...

Honoring Game Warden Pilot Joshua Tibbets

In funeral service, there are moments that remind us why this profession is unlike any other. The funeral honors held for Maine Game Warden Pilot Joshua Tibbetts on May 21, 2026 was one of those moments.

What took place that day was far more than a funeral. It was a community coming together to honor a life of service, sacrifice, and dedication. It was also a powerful reminder that in funeral service, no one accomplishes something of this magnitude alone.

From the moment the initial call came in Tuesday May 12, 2026 , an entire network of professionals stepped forward with a shared purpose: to provide the Tibbetts family, the Maine Warden Service, and the greater community with a tribute worthy of Josh's life and legacy.

Alyssa Brugger and Ross Sukeforth from Crosby and Neal Funeral Home worked tirelessly caring for the family and helping meet the emotional needs of honoring a father, son, and partner. The entire staff of Crosby and Neal continually checked in on the wardens maintaining their 24-hour watch throughout the week.

Ryan Welch of Kiley Foley Funeral Service in Bangor was instrumental in helping navigate the countless day-of logistics and operational details that accompany a service of this scale and attended multiple meeting at the Cross Center with me to ensure all details were covered and met.

Special thanks are also owed to Joe Kiley, Ryan Welch, Bob Welch, Alan Parady, Dianne Roach, and Becky from Kiley Foley Funeral Service, Danny Hatt, Brock Thomas, and Patrick Carleton from Staples Funeral Home; Susie Lambert and April Hargreaves from Dan and Scott's Cremation Care, Lisa Chestnut from Somerset Remembrance Center , Wendy Regan, Ross Sukeforth, Sr. from Crosby and Neal,

Riley Bishop and Lindsey Karwacki of Veillieux-Redington-Lawry Bros and Nikolai Blentlinger, and Samuel Clark from Birmingham Funeral Home.

While there were many moving parts, adjustments, and inevitable challenges along the way, every person involved remained focused on the same common goal — serving the family with dignity, professionalism, and compassion.

One of the most meaningful aspects of this experience was the reminder that funeral service is bigger than any one funeral home. Although many of us may serve different communities or even be considered competitors in business, moments like this demonstrate the true heart of our profession. When a family and community are grieving, funeral professionals come together in support of one another because the mission transcends competition.

This level of cooperation reflects the very best of funeral service in Maine. It shows our communities that behind every service is a network of caring professionals willing to work side by side to ensure families receive the support, honor, and care they deserve during life's most difficult moments.

Funeral service often happens quietly behind the scenes, with much of the work unseen by the public. Yet events like this help demonstrate the true value of what we do. We are not simply coordinating logistics or ceremonies — we are helping communities grieve, honor, heal, and remember.

For many involved, this service was also deeply personal. Outside of funeral service, I come from a background in outdoor education and conservation, and many of the wardens involved are close personal friends. That personal connection made the compassion, professionalism, and teamwork displayed throughout the week even more meaningful.

As funeral professionals, we are entrusted with some of the most sacred moments in people's lives. The service for Game Warden Pilot Joshua Tibbetts was a powerful example of what can be accomplished when we work together in support of that responsibility.

Every person involved should take pride in what was accomplished. What was provided that day mattered deeply — not only to one family, but to an entire agency and community mourning the loss of one of their own.

It was an honor to stand beside so many dedicated professionals in service to that mission.

Argo Michael Regan
Managing Funeral Director

Birmingham Funeral Home
438 Main St
Old Town, ME 04468
207.827.6369
www.birminghamfuneralhome.com

Crosby & Neal Funeral Home
117 Main St
Newport, ME 04953
207.368.4331
www.crosbyneal.com



Welcome Corey Bowman!

Join us in welcoming Corey Bowman of New England Cremation Supply as MFDA's newest Associate Member. Below is a message from Corey...

New England Cremation Supply (NECS), founded in 1995, is a family owned and operated business, servicing the cremation supply needs of hundreds of Funeral Homes, Crematories and Cemeteries throughout New England and America. Our growth and success over the past 31 years is based on our philosophy of providing quality products, personal service and affordable prices. Our valued customers have come to count on our integrity, trust, knowledge, timely deliveries, innovative new products and our genuine interest in helping them with all their supply needs.

NECS has now become one of the largest manufacturers/distributors of wood based human cremation containers and shipping containers throughout New England and upstate NY.



Congratulations to Tommy “Papa” Newhall!

Tommy is now the proud Papa to Adelyn Jay Audette. Adelyn was born on May 6, 2026 weighing in at 6lbs 11 oz and 20” long to Tommy’s daughter Teagan and her husband Alex. Congratulations to the Newhall and Audette families.



Cape Cod Community College Graduation

Dan Shea of Cape Cod Community College shares photos and live broadcast of their recent graduate pinning ceremony and Pi Sigma Eta Induction. See links below.

[Pinning Ceremony](#)

[Pi Sigma Eta Ceremony](#)

<https://client.tribucast.com/tcid/m26054285821814>

Legislative Update

During these summer months, the Legislative Committee is monitoring the political campaigns, continuing relationship building and will be looking forward to meeting the new legislators in the upcoming session.

In addition we are monitoring for any notices on Rule-Making. We will update you as soon as we get word as to when these processes will start.

Pre-Need Insurance Rulemaking – The law allowing pre-need insurance has passed, but funeral establishments may not sell or advertise this option until technical

rulemaking is completed by the Maine State Board of Funeral Service. MFDA continues to monitor the rulemaking timeline and will notify members when public comment periods are announced. There has been no change since last month's update.

Natural Organic Reduction (NOR) Rulemaking MFDA is still awaiting formal updates on the status of NOR rulemaking. We will communicate developments as soon as additional information becomes available.

[Read more](#) about [Wend & Root](#), a company planning on building the Next Generation of NOR in Maine.

Did You Know?

Are you aware of the Mortuary Trust Prepaid Burial Contract Maine Care Exemption Limit?

The current burial contract exemption limit (effective 1/1/2026) is **\$18,985**. You can find this information in the [MaineCare Eligibility Guidelines](#) on the DHHS webpage.

This increase is available as a result of the legislation that was initiated by the MFDA in 2023 (LD446/Chapter 34), that states that the amount of a prepaid burial contract that is considered unavailable for use as an asset in determining edibility for MaineCare must be increased by the same percentage as the percentage increase of the Consumer Price Index for the preceding year.

Are you interested in becoming a Field Examiner for the OCME?

The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner is looking for Field Examiners and are holding training June 9 - 11 from 9am - 4pm at the Maine State Police Headquarters in Augusta.

If you can't attend the training but are still interested in the program, feel free to email the OCME office at ocme@maine.gov or call 207-624-7180.

RSVP

ocme@maine.gov or
Sandra.Slemmer@maine.gov

[More Info](#)

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Stephen Lynch, Vice President of Finance

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NGL®

From the Maine State Board of Funeral Service

From Peter Arsenault, State Board Chair

The Maine State Board of Funeral Service exists to protect the public health and welfare by regulating the practice of funeral service in the State of Maine. Its primary duties include overseeing and enforcing state laws and rules, examining and licensing qualified applicants, inspecting funeral establishments, reviewing consumer complaints and disciplining licensees, including revoking or refusing to renew licenses when warranted after proper notice and hearing.

There are currently two vacant seats on the Board for Public Members. Public members are not required to have technical expertise or experience in funeral service.

If you know someone who may be interested in serving, please encourage them to follow the application process below:

To be considered for appointment to this personal board, candidates must submit a letter to the Governor expressing their interest, along with the following:

- Updated Resume
- Application for Gubernatorial Appointment Form (MS Word).
- Tax Clearance
- Personal Release Form (MS Word)
- Conflict of Interest Form (PDF): if applying for a Licensing and Regulatory Board

Send all materials to:

Office of the Governor
Boards and Commissions
1 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Personal board appointments do not require a public hearing or legislative approval. Appointees must be sworn in by a Dedimus Justice within 30 days of appointment. If they are not sworn in within that timeframe, they may not serve until reappointed by the Governor.

Peter Arsenault
Chair, Maine State Board of Funeral Service

NYC Cemetery Now Offers ‘Human Composting’ – Turning Corpses Into ‘Environmentally Sustainable’ Soil

[by Alessio Atria of UInterview](#)

The Green-Wood Cemetery, located in Brooklyn, New York, announced that it will be implementing the option of composting dead bodies into healthy soil.

Last week, it was revealed that the Green-Wood Cemetery was set to become the first cemetery on the East Coast to implement “Natural Organic Reduction,” otherwise known as human composting, or “terramation.”

[Read More...](#)

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She Buries the Dead Who Have No One Left to Say Goodbye

[By Rose Lundy of the Maine Monitor](#)

As the sun broke through after days of chilly April rain, about 30 people gathered at the First Parish Cemetery in York to honor a man none of them had known. James, 80, had no friends and family to attend his funeral. His wife, Dorothy, is still alive but has advanced dementia and could not leave her long-term care facility. They have no children and no known relatives.

Instead, in attendance were people from the company that delivered James' oil, York town selectboard members, volunteers from the food pantry, members of a local church and one of his neighbors. James and his wife had lived in York for nearly 40 years.

When Janie Sweeney found out James had died, she put out the word about his funeral to ensure he wouldn't be sent off alone. Sweeney, who is the family services manager for the York Community Service Association, asked The Maine Monitor to refer to James by his first name since he couldn't consent to being named. Sweeney said it was important to bury James in his long-time community. "It matters a great deal to me that people are not sent on the next journey alone, that they are laid to rest with dignity and people around," Sweeney said.

[Read More...](#)

The Connecticut, Maine, and Massachusetts Funeral Directors Associations Present ...



2026 ANNUAL OSHA TRAINING WEB SERIES

Ensure Your Staff Is Certified —Register Today!

We are pleased to once again offer our annual OSHA training sessions via live Zoom webinars. This convenient one-hour program allows your entire staff to complete their required annual OSHA certification simultaneously—efficiently and cost-effectively.

OSHA training is mandatory for all licensed funeral home staff, apprentices, and Massachusetts-registered funeral home assistants. This program is approved for 1 CEU credit by the Massachusetts State Board of Embalming and Funeral Directing, as well as by the APFSP for participants in Connecticut and Maine. It fully satisfies all annual OSHA training requirements, including those related to bloodborne pathogens.

Choose from any of our upcoming 2026 sessions!

Registration Fees:

\$125 per session for FDA member firms in Connecticut, Maine, and Massachusetts (covers unlimited staff per location)

\$250 per individual participant for non-member firms

Questions?

We're happy to help:

Phone: 781.335.2031 | Email: events@massfda.org



Massachusetts FDA | 536 Broad Street #4, Weymouth, MA 02189
T: 781-335-2031 | www.massfda.org | events@massfda.org

Choose from Four Available Sessions!

Please be reminded that the licensing year for Massachusetts licensees will conclude on October 31st.

All Training Done via Zoom @ 2 PM

June 11, 2026

September 10, 2026

October 8, 2026

October 22, 2026

December 10, 2026

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Thank you to our Bronze Sponsors:



NFDA Welcomes New Class of National Emerging Leaders Program Participants

Brookfield, Wis. — The National Funeral Directors Association (NFDA) has selected 12 funeral service professionals from across the United States to participate in the 2026-27 National Emerging Leaders Program, a year-long leadership development experience designed to prepare the next generation of funeral service leaders. Each year, a select group of emerging professionals is chosen to take part in the collaborative learning experience, which combines in-person training, virtual education sessions and mentorship opportunities. Created to support talented early-career professionals, the National Emerging Leaders Program equips participants with the leadership skills, professional connections and strategic insights needed to thrive in today's evolving funeral service landscape.

The 2026-27 program will begin with a kick-off retreat at NFDA headquarters in Brookfield, Wisconsin, June 21-23, 2026, and conclude with graduation during the 2027 NFDA Leadership Conference.

Throughout the year, participants will take part in approximately seven virtual learning sessions featuring both funeral service experts and leadership professionals from outside the industry. Program topics include mentorship and professional development, ethical leadership, employee relations, collaborative decision-making, strategic planning, servant leadership, communication skills and small business ownership.

"The National Emerging Leaders Program continues to identify and develop talented professionals who are passionate about the future of funeral service," said Sara Moss, MS, FT, LFD, associate director of Education. "These individuals represent the next generation of leaders who will help guide our profession forward through innovation, service and engagement."

Participants in the 2026-27 National Emerging Leaders Program are:

- Katherine Arriola, Forest Lawn Memorial Parks, Long Beach, California
- Myiesha Fields, Mansfield Funeral Home & Cremations, Mansfield, Texas
- Stephanie Klisz, Phaneuf Funeral Homes & Crematorium, Manchester, New Hampshire

- Corey Marshall, Dunn Funeral Home & Cremation Services Inc., Burgaw, North Carolina
- Brittany Moton, Mansfield Funeral Home & Cremations, Mansfield, Texas
- Maranda Price, Good Shepherd Funeral Home, Omaha, Nebraska
- Stephen Rios, Altmeyer Funeral Home, Virginia Beach, Virginia
- Kandice Saulsberry, Dale-Riggs Funeral Home Inc., Toledo, Ohio
- Willie Shelby, Hudson Funeral Service, Greenville, Alabama
- Kelly Marie Walker, Gardner Funeral Home, Cascade Locks, Oregon
- Steven Wilkes, Kiser Funeral Home, Cheraw, South Carolina
- Jalon Williams, Willie A. Watkins Funeral Home, Atlanta, Georgia

Participants were selected through a competitive application process that considered leadership potential, professional involvement, community engagement and commitment to advancing the funeral service profession.

Since its launch, the program has helped develop dozens of emerging leaders who now serve as leaders in their funeral homes, communities and professional associations.

NFDA extends its appreciation to the Funeral Service Foundation for its continued support of the National Emerging Leaders Program.

NFDA Educational Events

Strengthen Your Arrangement Skills From Anywhere

Arrangements are at the heart of meaningful funeral services, and NFDA's Virtual Arrangement Solutions Academy is designed to help you approach them with greater confidence, clarity and connection. Led by NFDA trainer Lanae Strovers, the Academy brings together funeral professionals in a small-group setting to explore real-world strategies you can apply immediately. [Learn more and sign up today.](#)

Upcoming Events

Missed a recent NFDA Webinar? Check out recordings of select events [here.](#)

- Webinar: Annual FTC Funeral Rule Review, June 17, 2026 01:00 PM

On Demand Learning

The NFDA educational programs have been designed with you in mind. NFDA makes it easier for you to get continuing education credits by offering education opportunities that are convenient for you. Choose online courses or home study programs to learn at your own pace from the comfort of your own home or office. NFDA courses are approved for CE through December 31 of the year of purchase only. Before the end of the year, students receive an email reminder to complete outstanding CE courses on time.

Several Options are available on Subject Matters such as:

- Business Management/Operations
- Compliance and Ethics
- Professional Skills/Career Development
- Embalming
- Grief and Bereavement
- Marketing

[Learn More](#)

Conferences & Events

- August 2-5, Leadership Conference, Louisville, KY
- October 25-28, NFDA International Convention & Expo, Charlotte, NC – registration opens June 2

Level Up Webinar Series – free for NFDA members and \$79 for nonmembers

- June 17, Annual FTC Funeral Rule Review

NFDA Cremation Certification Program

- June 13, 2026 - Springfield, MO
- July 9, 2026 - Birmingham, AL

Earn cremation certification from the comfort of your home or office with our [online certification option](#).

NFDA Arranger Training

- September 14 - October 5

InSight Institute's Certified Celebrant Training

- June 24 through 26 at NFDA Headquarters in Brookfield, Wisconsin

NFDA Certified Preplanning Consultant Program

Earn your CPC designation from the comfort of your workplace or home with our self-study option.

Other NFDA Events

Visit our events calendar, [NFDA.org/Events](https://www.nfda.org/events)

Maine Funeral Directors Association

Supporting the Future of Funeral Service in Maine

Scholarship Program

\$2,000 Annual Scholarship

Are you pursuing a career in Funeral Service?

The Maine Funeral Directors Association (MFDA) Scholarship supports students preparing for Funeral Practitioner licensure.

The Maine Funeral Directors Association has supported Funeral Professionals across the state since 1925. Through education, advocacy, and a strong professional network, MFDA helps members stay connected, share knowledge, and navigate the evolving needs of the communities they serve.

Applications will be accepted between **July 1st and August 1st**. No exceptions.
Awards will be announced at the October Annual Meeting on 10/14/2026.

The MFDA Scholarship Fund is made possible through the generous support of members, community contributions, memorial gifts (in lieu of flowers), our annual golf tournament, and fundraising raffles.

[More Information](#)

Contact the Maine Funeral Directors Association at
207-729-9100 or email carolgay@mainefuneraldirectors.org.



Save the Date: 2026 MFDA Fall Fest

October 13–14, 2026

In 2026, the MFDA Fall Fest moves to the beautiful **Harraseeket Inn in Freeport** — a classic Maine setting that offers the perfect blend of education, connection, and a little well-earned relaxation.

Expect the same strong CEU programming, meaningful networking, and Scholarship Fund support you value — with a fresh backdrop and a few new touches we can't wait to share.

Freeport in October speaks for itself — crisp air, coastal views, and plenty to explore between sessions.

Schedule at a Glance

Tuesday, October 13

- MFDA Scholarship Fundraiser – Val Halla Golf Course (11:30am–6:30pm)

- MFDA Meet & Greet – Harraseeket Inn (7:00pm–11:00pm)

Wednesday, October 14

- MFDA Fall Fest Convention – Harraseeket Inn (7:30am–4:30pm)
- 6 CEUs
- Annual Member Meeting
- Networking, great food, raffles, and time with colleagues from across Maine

This event continues to strengthen our profession while supporting the students preparing to join it.

More details — including programming and registration — will be coming soon.

For now, mark your calendar.

You won't want to miss this one!

Make your reservations at the charming [Harraseeket Inn](#).

The group rate is \$209 plus tax. You can either call the Inn directly at 207-865-9377, press option 2 to speak with a Guest Service Representative OR use the link below:

[Harraseeket Inn Reservations: MFDA Fall Fest, October 12-14, 2026](#)

Lodging Cutoff Date is Monday, 9/14/2026



Lehigh Valley funeral director featured in Times Square for campaign honoring funeral professionals

A local funeral director and supervisor is garnering national recognition for a profession that offers “steadiness when families need it most.”

Justin Keiper, funeral director and supervisor of Cantelmi Funeral Home in Fountain Hill, was recently featured in New York City’s Times Square as part of a national campaign recognizing the work of funeral professionals.

Keiper appeared in Chptr’s “The First Call” campaign, a public recognition initiative highlighting the role funeral directors play in guiding families through loss and supporting communities in life’s most difficult moments, according to a news release. Local Trending News

Displayed on digital billboards in the heart of Times Square, the campaign brought national visibility to a profession that often works quietly behind the scenes.

The campaign’s name, The First Call, reflects a reality many families know well: after the death of a loved one, funeral directors are often among the very first people families turn to for guidance, steadiness and care.

[Read More...](#)

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