

From the Chair

Greetings!

It has been an interesting summer for the AFSRB and, particularly for Karen (Executive Director) and me, as we travelled the Province. Summer Forums took place at nine different locations in Alberta and almost 200 funeral professionals took advantage of this opportunity to communicate on current issues. These professionals joined in the discussion about both the education offerings from the approved schools and continuing education for licensees. The exchange of views and opinions was appreciated by the attendees and the AFSRB. Ongoing communication between the AFSRB and funeral services professionals assists all of us in improving the delivery of funeral services to consumers.

As previously communicated, the AFSRB has approved the core competencies for funeral service professionals: *business practice, communication, professionalism and technical expectations*.

The Funeral Education Review Committee (FERC) has also made a number of recommendations relating to the education and training of new members of the profession. Those who attended the Summer Forums heard about the intention of FERC in making these recommendations and had the chance to offer comments and discuss the recommendations with their colleagues. Of those who attended, 84% submitted responses to the survey questions which were circulated.

The results are as follows:

- 1) Eligibility requirements for students entering program - 88% approval
- 2) Funeral services businesses to register their students with AFSRB - 93% approval
- 3) Mandatory standardized training for sponsors - 82% approval
- 4) Neutral third-party mentorship program - 57% approval
- 5) Standardized log books for all students - 91% approval
- 6) Additional written exam for embalmers - 69% approval

FERC will now consider these survey results and provide further input and recommendations to the AFSRB. AFSRB has also been receiving input on these matters from the two approved schools. We will keep you advised of further developments on this topic.

This summer also included the roll out of the AHS mandatory course in various centers across Alberta. The AFSRB understood that this course would provide assistance to funeral service businesses in preparing for the AHS inspections which commenced this fall. It seems that all parties are going through a learning process in the development of AHS expectations. Your ongoing cooperation as this process evolves is appreciated.

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Del August

December 2017

This newsletter contains additional information on topics of importance to you, including the introduction of the new inspector/investigator hired by the AFSRB.

As a reminder for all of you (especially those who did not participate in the discussions this summer), the Code of Conduct for funeral service professionals requires all of you to "*compete on merit*". The AFSRB hopes to see a reduction in the number of business-to-business complaints and an increase in the standard of funeral services delivered to the public as each of you follows these words and your Code of Conduct.

Christine G Rapp, Q.C.
CHAIR

Welcome to our new Public Members

We welcome our two new public members to the Board, Barbara McKinley and Wendy Lickacz. Both of our new public members reside in the Edmonton area. They are looking forward to serving on the Funeral Board and learning about the funeral profession. A bio for each of our public members will appear on the AFSRB website in the near future.

Welcome to our new inspector/investigator!

Del August is a retired member of the Edmonton Police Service having served 25 years in a variety of roles including: Patrol, Surveillance Unit, Alcohol & Breath Testing Unit, Vice and part of the Alberta Law Enforcement Response Team. After retiring he worked for the Government of Alberta as an investigator in Maintenance Enforcement and Service Alberta. He moved on and worked for WestJet in Air Supply and at Rogers Place as an Alcohol Compliance Supervisor.

Del has two kids Brendan (23yrs) and Brooke (19yrs). He enjoys travelling, golf and is a big sports fan. Del is looking forward to meeting everyone in the funeral services industry and understanding this interesting job.

Del can be contacted by email at del@afsrab.ca.

Pre-need contract register required

Under section 15 of the Funeral Services Act General Regulation, there are some very specific requirements for records that must be maintained by the funeral services businesses. The records of every funeral services business licensee shall contain a register of pre-need funeral services contracts that are funded by trust as well as by insurance.

The register must be maintained as a standalone document and must be available to present to the AFSRB inspector during inspections. Even though this information is likely found in your individual pre-need files, there also needs to be a spreadsheet or book, summarizing the information listed in section 15 for the pre-need contracts held by your business.

There are three reasons why this register is important. First of all, it is required by the legislation. Secondly, if the pre-need contracts are funded by trust, there needs to be a check and balance between the amounts the Trustee shows as being held in the trust account and the amounts the funeral services business shows for pre-need contracts that are funded by trust. By comparing the two separate records indicating the amount the business shows should be in trust and the amount which is actually in trust, one can determine if monies have not made it to the proper location. This scenario also holds true for insurance funded contracts to ensure that the contracts a business shows as being funded by insurance match the insurance policies provided. Thirdly, if a business is being sold or shut down, it is a very simple process to determine the contract holders that need to be contacted. Without the register, individual files would need to be researched and it would be easier for a contract holder to miss the notification from the business.

If you have any questions about the register, please contact the office.

AHS INSPECTIONS

This communication is to inform funeral home directors in Alberta that Alberta Health Services, Environmental Public Health will be providing copies of initial inspection reports to the Alberta Funeral Services Regulatory Board. These reports will outline observations made during inspections and could include recommendations for corrective actions. Alberta Health Services will be working collaboratively with directors and the regulatory board during this process. Please contact Environmental Public Health if you have any questions.

Environmental Public Health Offices:

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|------------------|--------------|--|
| Calgary Zone | 403-943-2295 | CalgaryZone.EnvironmentalHealth@ahs.ca |
| Central Zone | 403-356-6366 | CentralZone.EnvironmentalHealth@ahs.ca |
| Edmonton Zone | 780-735-1800 | EdmontonZone.EnvironmentalHealth@ahs.ca |
| North Zone | 780-513-7517 | NorthZone.EnvironmentalHealth@ahs.ca |
| South Zone | 403-388-6689 | SouthZone.EnvironmentalHealth@ahs.ca |

Legacy Private Trust

The AFSRB and some funeral service businesses have been approached by Legacy Private Trust, a company out of Ontario that is looking to solicit funeral trust business in Alberta. One of the requirements of the Funeral Services Act is that companies that hold trust money under this legislation must be registered under the Alberta Trust and Loans Corporations Act. Legacy Private Trust does not currently meet this requirement. At this time, the AFSRB would not be approving the transfer of any trust money to Legacy Private Trust as there would need to be a further review of Legacy's eligibility/suitability to operate in Alberta.

Mandatory Continuing Education

The first round of in-person courses offered by the Environmental Public Health Officers under Alberta Health Services was concluded in September. There are a number of licensees who have not completed this course and the AFSRB has a list of these people. AHS has confirmed that they will be offering some form of the mandatory course in the near future, so those who have not been able to complete this requirement will have the opportunity to do so. Licensees will need to complete this mandatory course by March 31, 2019.

When information becomes available on additional sessions of this course, the AFSRB will contact all those licensees who still need to meet this requirement. All funeral business managers will also be provided with this information.

The AFSRB is recommending all funeral services businesses' websites include a link to the AFSRB website. For additional details, please contact the office.

The Board would like to wish everyone a very happy and safe holiday season!

The AFSRB Newsletter can also be found on our website at www.afsrb.ab.ca.