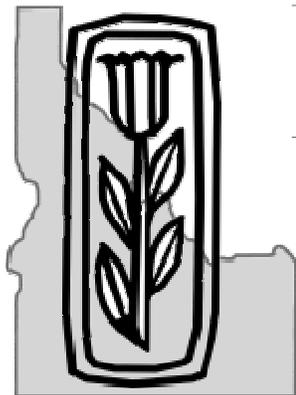


Funeral Consumers Alliance of Idaho



SURVEYING FUNERAL HOME PRICES

One of our periodic tasks is to survey funeral providers in our area and report to the membership (as well as the general public) what we find. Our summary gives only a tiny glimpse of the world of General Price Lists (GPLs), however. We report the prices for minimal services and no goods, for "direct cremation" and "immediate burial." The prices shown do not include a casket, or a container for the cremation process, nor do they include any "visitation," funeral or memorial service provided by the business.

In other words, the prices are all "and up." If you want the deluxe package (not likely if you're reading the FCAI newsletter), you can pay many times the minimum. Add a handsome, brand-name casket to a direct cremation, and even though there will still be no attendant, rites or ceremonies, you can burn (literally!) several thousand dollars more.

It was the exorbitant cost of funeral goods and services that led consumers to demand action of the Federal Trade Commission, and for that agency to create The Funeral Rule, requiring funeral establishments to provide you with a GPL. The Rule's specific requirements help you to understand what you're buying, and to compare prices. The Rule isn't particularly complicated, but surprisingly few providers manage to meet the letter of it, much less its intent: to clearly describe what's being sold, and for what price.

We do appreciate the 19 businesses that responded to our mailed requests, as the law does not require them to respond by mail (or email), only to hand-deliver a GPL to anyone coming to their place of business. We're disappointed to receive no response from 50 businesses in the state.

We have been surveying the south-central and southeast biannually, and the southwest annually. This year, we sent requests to the more than 70 businesses listed in the Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licensing's database, including those in central and north Idaho. If we receive additional GPLs, updates or corrections after our print deadline, we will keep our website up-to-date. You can help:

BE A GPL DETECTIVE

If you visit an Idaho funeral establishment not listed in our survey because they didn't respond to our inquiry, we invite you to request a General Price List from them, and share it with us. Mail us a copy, or send an email with the prices for the two packages shown (with no container, urn, or casket included). For direct cremation, do verify that the crematory fee is included. If the GPL *doesn't* state that it is, we assume that the fee is "extra" and will be added to the package price.

COOPERATING MORTUARIES WANTED

We want to extend the geographic reach of our services to members, and better serve more of Idaho. Our existing cooperating mortuary, Accent Funeral Home in Meridian, is close to the majority of our membership here in southwest Idaho. While Accent can serve the far reaches of central and southeast Idaho, the cost for them to retrieve remains can become a significant portion of the total bill. The FCAI member rate is currently \$1/mile for the one-way distance, but expect this to go up with increasing fuel costs. (Their non-member charge is \$1.50/mile; \$1.50-1.75 is typical, but some providers charge \$2/mile or more beyond a local 35-50 mile radius.)

If you've had a positive experience with a funeral home in other parts of the state, and think they may be sympathetic to our organization's purpose of helping people obtain simple, dignified and affordable funeral goods and services, please let us know, by telephone, mail or email.

A SPECIAL FCAI ANNUAL MEETING

It's a good while until spring, but it's not too early to put this event on your calendar: our next annual meeting, on **Saturday, May 12, 2007**.

Josh Slocum, Executive Director of the national Funeral Consumers Alliance will be our guest speaker. We're excited about the chance to bring a prominent consumer advocate to Boise, and to energize the work of our Alliance in southern Idaho. The national FCA monitors funeral industry trends, helps expose abuses, and advocates for legal and regulatory reform where it's needed. The FCA provides a clearinghouse for information to us and to more than 100 affiliates around the country, always ready to provide advice and guidance.

Please consider a contribution to your Alliance to help to make this special event happen. Josh's travel expenses (from FCA's home in Vermont) are our responsibility; we'll stretch our budget as best we can, but your specific donations toward defraying the expense will help keep us financially sound.

FCA OF IDAHO 2006 PRICE SURVEY

Based on information provided in the General Price List (GPL) of responding mortuaries for minimal services (removal of the body, immediate burial or direct cremation with no funeral service, no cremation container, and no casket). GPLs list immediate burials and direct cremations as packages, and some packages include additional services.

Consumers should review mortuaries' GPLs carefully when comparing. See our publication "How to read a mortuary's general price list" available on our website or by request. Survey requests sent in late October, responses as of Dec. 2, 2006.

There are 52 other funeral establishments licensed in the state. We're still waiting for their responses.

Note:

[1] Not clear if crematory fee is included in direct cremation price.

		Direct cremation	Immediate burial	
North and Central				
Shorts Funeral Chapel	Moscow	1430	1570	
Shoshone Funeral Service	Kellogg	1950	1678	
Uhlorn	Cottonwood	1410	1550	
Vassar Rawls FH	Lewiston	905	1010	
South-central				
Demaray Gooding Chapel	Gooding	1300	1325	
Parke's Magic Valley Funeral	Twin Falls	800	Not listed	
Serenity Funeral Chapel	Twin Falls	1020	1045	
Southeast				
Baxter	Ashton	1710	1495	
Downard Hansen	Pocatello	1154	2836	[1]
Jones & Casey	Salmon	1800	1975	
Southwest				
Accent Funeral Home	Meridian	960	1105	
Alden-Waggoner Funeral Chapel	Boise	1475	1385	
Bell Funeral Home	Garden City	1145	1070	
Bowman Funeral Parlor	Garden City	750	750	
Chapel of the Chimes Funeral Home	Meridian	1345	1395	
Cloverdale Funeral Home	Boise	1350	1565	
Gibson Funeral Home	Boise	1350	1565	
Nampa Funeral Home / Yraguen Chapel	Nampa	1075	1000	
Relyea Funeral Chapel	Boise	1275	1475	
Shaffer-Jensen	Fruitland, Payette, New Plymouth	1780	1295	
Zeyer Funeral Chapel	Nampa	800	1145	

THE MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION

When we update our price survey, many members look up our cooperating mortuary and want to know: *Why doesn't Accent have the lowest price?*

The answer is that they do offer FCAI members the lowest price. The current contract price for members is **\$630** for direct cremation, and **\$655** for immediate burial. Having customers who know what they want (and what they don't want), and who are better prepared, including assembling the information for the death certificate on the "Putting My House in Order" form, gives them a cost savings that they can pass on to us.

Funeral Consumers Alliance of Idaho

PO Box 1919
Boise ID 83701-1919
phone: 208 426-0032
email: fcai@fortboise.org
web: fcai.fortboise.org

Board members

Mary Lou Brownson, Vice-president
Donna Carino, Secretary
Sheryce Davis, Membership Sec'y
Bryan Jennings, Treasurer
Tom von Alten, President

PLANNING A SAINT'S FUNERAL SERVICE

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh told a story of three Chinese mystics, friends known as the laughing saints. Often together, the three men begged for their dinner and paid in songs, dances and jokes that left everyone around them feeling better.

After many years, one of the three saints died. The village people sent word to the dead man's friends, who showed up laughing, clapping their hands and dancing a few steps, as usual. The villagers were shocked. Shouldn't you show some respect for your dear friend, they asked? Now is the time to wash his body, dress him in better clothes, and burn his body respectfully.

"No, no," protested one friend. "Change nothing, please."

"Our friend made his wishes known to us. He wanted us to celebrate in his style, celebrate our happy memories and the laughter he gave us," said the other.

And so the villagers honored the dead man's wishes. They built a pyre and stood around it together, sadly. At the same time, the saint's two friends waited as if they were expecting something. Would the saint awake, walk out of the fire? Would his spirit be manifest to all of them?

It was. There was a burst of explosions, light and crackles and booms. The dying man had stuffed his clothing with fireworks, and suddenly there was *Diwali!* A feast of lights! The two friends laughed and started dancing and everyone joined them.

Thanks to Jeanette Ross for this version of the story.