

New York State Funeral Directors Association Receives EPA Award for Water Conservation

Albany, NY -- November 30 - The New York State Funeral Directors Association (NYSFDA) has been honored with one of the first annual national Water Efficiency Leader (WEL) Awards from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Only six awards were given nationwide, and NYSFDA was the sole winner in the Organizations/Teams/Associations category.

The WEL Awards are aimed at recognizing outstanding leadership and innovation in water efficiency. Winners were chosen by a panel of national water experts and based on three criteria: leadership, innovation, and water saved. Recognition is given on the basis of persuasive community or organizational leadership in the area of water efficiency, originality and public purpose, global perspective and implications, and overall improvements in water efficiency.

NYSFDA President John C. Sommese stated that it is very gratifying to have the funeral directors' hard work and wide-ranging involvement in this very important matter recognized not only nationally, but by the very federal agency charged with oversight and enforcement of water quality. "This award is a direct reflection of the deep-seated commitment by funeral directors, particularly NYSFDA members, to the health and well-being of the communities we serve each and every day. Although we faced difficult challenges during the seven year development of this process, the willingness of funeral directors to address the issue of water efficiency resulted in the drafting of NYSFDA's guidelines that we believe will serve as a model for funeral directors all over the country."

According to the EPA, NYSFDA has "worked diligently" to promote an innovative approach, through a series of best management practices, to reduce the volume of water used in an embalming from 120 gallons to 5 gallons. Importantly, EPA noted that recent inspections by the Federal agency have indicated wide adoption of this comprehensive series of recommendations. Overall water savings in each funeral home that uses the new technology is 96%.

Founded in 1889, NYSFDA's mission is to promote the highest standards of funeral service to the public and to enhance the environment in which its members operate. More than 800 member firms and 3000 licensed funeral directors who operate across the state belong to the New York State Funeral Directors Association. In addition to maintaining a Website at www.nysfda.org, NYSFDA also publishes a newspaper column "Transitions" and brochures which educate and inform consumers about end-of-life issues.