

PEOPLE'S MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION RELEASES STATE FUNERAL SURVEY

Seattle, Washington

Despite low inflation rates, a survey by the People's Memorial Association (PMA) has found that prices for funerals and cremations have increased more than 40 percent in the state.

The PMA Education Fund conducted the 2007 survey of 170 funeral homes in Western and Central Washington and found that since 2000, average cremation prices have gone up by 40 percent, and average direct burial prices have gone up nearly 50 percent.

"There are several changes occurring in the industry," said John Eric Rolfstad, executive director of PMA. "First, the rate of cremation is increasing by one or two percentage rates a year in nearly

every demographic group. In addition, there is tremendous stratification occurring as corporate funeral homes are raising their prices...many low-cost providers have entered the marketplace as well."

The price survey consists of prices for three types of disposition: simple cremation, direct burial and a complete funeral service with embalming, viewing and services.

The survey found huge variations in price. Cremation ranged from a low of \$425 in Sumner to \$2,844 in Bellevue — a more than 600-percent difference. The average price of cremation in the region is \$1,492.

Direct burial ranged from \$1,067 in

Renton or Kirkland to \$4,310 in Moses Lake. The average price of direct burial is \$2,200.

A complete funeral with a basic casket ranged everywhere from \$1,595 in Sequim to \$7,255 in Bellevue. The average price of a complete funeral in the region is \$3,946.

The PMA Education Fund is a non-profit organization that educates consumers regarding cremation and burial options. It is affiliated with the People's Memorial Association, a non-profit funeral consumer organization with approximately 100,000 members in Washington state. For a copy of the survey or more information, visit www.peoplesmemorial.org or call (206) 325-0489.