

ICCFA 2009 CONVENTION & EXPOSITION

RECORD NUMBERS 'JOIN THE EVOLUTION'

The International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA) held its 2009 Convention & Exposition on April 20-23 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The event drew 1,574 in total attendance and 310 supplier booths, shattering the association's previous records on both counts.

"Not only the number of attendees, but the energy they brought to this Convention made it our most successful ever," said ICCFA President Gregg Williamson, CCE. "At a time when many businesses are struggling and associations by and large face challenges, it was exciting to see the incredible turnout and positive attitude the attendees and suppliers brought to this event. Program Chairman Jeff Kidwiler and his committee are to be commended for their work in putting together a program that truly focused on the future of this profession and the possibilities that are open to us as we continue to reach out and serve families."

The Convention hosted 92 international attendees and exhibitors representing 14 countries outside of the United States.

Attendees gave the event excellent evaluations, with 96 percent rating their Overall Convention Experience as "excellent" or "very good." Among the comments:

Overall, one of the very best conventions I have attended. In addition to the number of vendors in the exhibit hall, the variety and quality of programs was outstanding. As a "first timer," I will definitely return next year! Stephen W. Smith, St. Louis Community College at Forest Park, St. Louis, Missouri

This was my first ICCFA Convention, and it was definitely worthwhile. The credibility and expertise of the presenters is to be admired. It's always beneficial to hear from real people with real-world examples. I look forward to next year! Adam Sanden, CPA, Brunner Funeral Homes & Cremation Service, Mentor, Ohio

I came for the marketing sessions and was not disappointed. The information regarding the Internet was very interesting. I enjoyed all the sessions I attended as well as the exhibits—lots of variety. Job well done! Darlene Hickey, Catholic Cemeteries Commission, Sackville, Nova Scotia

I was a "first timer" and thoroughly enjoyed it all. Everyone I met and made contact with was so easy to talk to and I had a "welcoming" feeling from the entire group. The Expo was outstanding. Kate Seeger, Bellevue Memorial Park, Ontario, California

I felt the presenters were very good as a whole. The topics were great. I liked the business and operations portions on how to actually improve your business and profits. Not a lot of "fluff" like some other conferences. Scott Hanes, Wonderly Horvath Hanes Funeral Home & Crematory, Fremont, Ohio

Although this was my first conference, it exceeded my expectations. Thanks for making this experience such a worthwhile and enjoyable one. Michael O'Connor, Hall-Wayne Funeral Service, Durham, North Carolina

Exhibitors rated the overall Exposition an average of 8.2 on a scale of 1 to 10. Asked about their plans for the 2010 Convention & Exposition, March 10-13 at the San Antonio Convention Center in San Antonio, Texas, 88 percent indicated they planned to exhibit, 10 percent were undecided and only 2 percent indicated they would not be present. A number of exhibitors noted that they planned to expand their presence at the 2010 Expo with larger booths.



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Founded in 1887, the **International Cemetery, Cremation and Funeral Association (ICCFA)** is the only international trade association representing all segments of the profession. Its membership consists of more than 7,400 cemeteries, funeral homes, crematories and related businesses worldwide.

The ICCFA offers four annual educational events:

Wide World of Sales Conference: The world's largest preneed sales and marketing conference offers keynote addresses from national sales trainers from outside the profession, along with "how-to" presentations by top preneed selling experts. Participatory exercises and a binder filled with handouts ensure that attendees take home real skills and tools they can put to use immediately.

Annual Convention & Exposition: The ICCFA Convention combines a mix of General Sessions on cutting-edge management topics with a slate of breakout sessions on specific operational and sales issues. The three-day Expo offers the profession's best opportunity of the year to meet face-to-face with supplier representatives and examine the newest products and services available. ICCFA's Expo is known as the friendliest and most productive in the industry, with 300+ supplier booths and free food and drink throughout the show.

ICCFA University: ICCFA University combines five days of intensive classroom education with campus-style housing, networking and recreation. Students choose from among six areas of study, and spend the full five days learning from experts in their area of concentration.

Fall Management Conference: The ICCFA Fall Management Conference offers programming geared toward top managers and executives, along with interactive CEO Symposium discussions and evening networking receptions. The 2009 Conference, October 7-10 in Washington, D.C., will include a behind-the-scenes tour of Arlington National Cemetery.

The ICCFA Web site offers the most extensive source of industry-related material in the world, with thousands of articles and videos amassed throughout the association's 122-year history. Some highlights from www.iccfa.com include:

The recently launched *Cremation Coaching Center*SM. Led by coaches Julie A. Burn, CCrE, CSE, and Poul Lemasters, Esq., the center offers resources, tools and support for cemeteries, crematories and funeral homes. Materials include cremation-related articles, videos and audio files, recommended cremation guidelines and procedures, sample cremation-related contracts, a coach's Q&A section and more.

The *ICCFA Café*, which includes discussion forums where ICCFA members can post questions and answers to management, sales and operational challenges; an industry blog corner where visitors can create their own articles and commentary; and the ICCFAWiki, a collaborative project where contributors can create and modify a growing list of industry-related service terms and practices.

For more details or to learn about membership in the ICCFA, visit www.iccfa.com or call 1.800.645.7700.

2009 ICCFA Attendance

Total cemetery, funeral home, crematory and allied business representatives: **747**

- 18 percent representing combination cemetery/funeral home operations
- 28 percent representing stand-alone cemeteries
- 38 percent representing stand-alone funeral homes
- 16 percent representing "other," including stand-alone crematories and cremation societies, professional associations and mortuary school students and faculty

Spouse/guest registrations: **205**

Press passes and speakers from outside the industry: **8**

Exhibitor and supplier registrations: **614**

Attendees classified their positions as follows:

- Owners: 45%
- Managers: 46%
- Staff: 9%
- Final purchasing authority: 64%
- Purchasing recommendations: 34 %
- No purchasing authority: 2%

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