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EVERGREEN CEMETERY ASSOCIATION
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May 2021

Dear Members and Friends of Evergreen Cemetery Association:

The Cemetery Board of Trustees along with Executive Director Dede Tollefson extend springtime greetings. We wish to express a heartfelt THANK YOU for the critical financial support many of you provide Evergreen Cemetery Association through your generous donations as we strive to perpetuate the legacy of Evergreen and Memorial Gardens cemeteries.

This past year has brought continued change to our Association. We are pleased to report that our new Executive Director Dede Tollefson has settled-in to her position as we continue to provide cemetery services to our community. A major change occurred last fall with the retirement of Superintendent Rusty Billman who concluded 30 years of dedicated and faithful service to the Association; a big Thank You to Rusty for his critical role these past years. The Board's efforts to engage a replacement have been unsuccessful to date. As a result, we have had to contract certain services; however, we are grateful to Rusty for being available to assist during the interim and transition. The continuing impact of cremation, and covid19, remain significant concerns related to our revenue and resources. Fewer burials equates to a significant negative effect on our income.

Due to the bleak financial future we are facing, the Board of Trustees has put together information that clearly shows the decline in burials (along with grave lot sales) and related financial projections. Formal presentations were made to the Brainerd City Council and the Crow Wing County Board; the information presented is available to you upon request. We look forward to continuing our discussions with both units of government, and we are particularly grateful to the County Board providing \$20,000 in 2021 specifically for maintenance and use at Memorial Gardens. We look forward to the City joining with the County in providing sustainable funding for the future. We are hopeful that we will be able to reach agreement that not only results in regular financial support but a better understanding of the importance of what well maintained cemeteries mean to the community - and one managed by a dedicated Board of volunteers.

Without question, challenges remain for the Board of Trustees in our efforts to perpetuate the legacy of our cemeteries as places of Rest, Remembrance and Reflection. The Board of Trustees regularly with due-diligence reviews overall operations with an emphasis on efficiency as well as ensuring appropriate service to association members and the general public. Our goal remains to maintain our cemeteries in the best possible conditions at all times with the resources available, and to appropriately care for the more than 20,000 burials within our cemeteries.

Even with the challenges faced, and with your support, additional much needed road repairs were accomplished this past year in Memorial Gardens and we were able to replace

the roofing and siding on the Office building. You may have read in the newspaper about the significant vandalism that occurred in the older (southerly) section of Evergreen. The cost to reset monuments and make appropriate repairs exceeded \$3,000, most of which was covered by donations – thank you for the extra donations. We continue to work on the development of a Tree/Vegetation Management Plan along with the assistance of a local arborist. With special donations we were able to do some planting of new trees at Memorial Gardens. Volunteers are always welcome for those who may wish to contribute their time and talents; if you may be interested in volunteering to assist with the work (office or grounds) of the cemeteries please complete the form at the end of this letter and return to the office.

THANK YOU for your past donations which have been essential in maintaining our cemeteries. We have no choice at the present time but to continue to ask for your ongoing financial support as donations now make up a critical part of our operating income. Be reminded that we are a 501(c)13 (tax deductible) non-profit public cemetery managed by a volunteer 9-member Board of Trustees. If you haven't made a prior donation, please consider adding Evergreen Cemetery Association to your charitable contribution recipients or even consider leaving a legacy gift by including the cemeteries in your will or estate planning as some folks have recently done.

Should you have any questions or desire information related to our cemeteries, please don't hesitate to contact any of the Trustees or our Executive Director. Our website contains valuable information about the Evergreen Cemetery Association including the important Directory of the Dead along with how to contact us for any reason. Website and Email information is noted within the letterhead along with the names of the Trustees.

Sincerely,

Board of Trustees
Evergreen Cemetery Association

ps: Checks can be made out to Evergreen Cemetery Association and mailed to the address above. Watch for information about tours of Evergreen Cemetery in conjunction with Brainerd History Week.

NO CHANGE TO MAIL LIST

CHANGE TO MAIL LIST

Name(s) _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Email (Office Use Only) _____

I am interested in volunteering for: Grounds Maintenance General Office Work

Areas of interest _____

I could volunteer: weekly monthly occasionally when called

I may have interest in serving on the Board of Trustees for EVERGREEN CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

I am currently available My availability is in the future - _____

Comments _____