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EVERGREEN CEMETERY ASSOCIATION
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May 20, 2022

Dear Members and Friends of Evergreen Cemetery Association:

The change of seasons signals that it is time for the Cemetery Board of Trustees along with Executive Director Dede Tollefson to extend springtime greetings. We also wish to express our heartfelt THANKS for the critical financial support many of you provide Evergreen Cemetery Association through your generous donations. In turn, we as your Board of Trustees strive to perpetuate the legacy of Evergreen and Memorial Gardens cemeteries.

Change seems to be the only constant for our Association. As reported last year a major change occurred with the retirement of Superintendent Rusty Billman who concluded 30 years of dedicated and faithful service to the Association. We are happy to announce that we recently hired Zebulon Hodel as our new Superintendent. We are grateful to Rusty for being available to assist during the transition. We do appreciate the good work of our Executive Director who has accepted overall coordination of cemetery operations as we continue to provide cemetery services to our community.

The financial future we are facing remains bleak, mostly due to the impact of cremation along with general competition from area cemeteries and the State Veterans cemetery at Camp Ripley. As previously reported, the Board of Trustees has put together information that clearly shows the decline in burials (along with grave lot sales) and related financial projections. Fewer burials equate to a significant negative effect on our income. Formal presentations were made to the Brainerd City Council and the Crow Wing County Board; the information presented to them 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 and again in 2022. We are hopeful that we will be able to reach agreement with the City 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.

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Even with the challenges faced, **but with your support**, additional much needed road repairs were accomplished this past year in Evergreen Cemetery (some of which was “weathered-out” and will be completed this year) along with major erosion repair work in several areas along the perimeter. A new sign identifying our Office was erected and new tree plantings were accomplished within Memorial Gardens - **all with donations**. We continue to work on the development of a Tree/Vegetation Management Plan along with the assistance of a local arborist. Dedicated donations for specific improvements will be respected as determined appropriate by the Board. 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 call or e-mail 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. Checks can be made out to Evergreen Cemetery Association and mailed to the address above.

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: We want to share some major needs and issues facing Evergreen Cemetery Association in the immediate and near future that you should be aware of.:

- 1.** Our loader/backhoe which is used for grave openings and miscellaneous maintenance activities needs to be replaced. It is an early 1950s John Deere model 310A and is incompatible with many areas of Evergreen (not particularly useable). Replacement cost is in the \$30,000 range.
- 2.** Our two general maintenance pickup trucks which were used/2nd hand at purchase are now 25+ years old and in need of serious repairs. We currently, for safety reasons, restrict one of these pickups to use only within Evergreen; the other unit is outfitted with a snowplow with dependability questionable at best. Costs for 5-10 year-old pickups is \$10-20,000, and new pickups can be \$50,000 or more.
- 3.** And a third major need is nominal remodeling of the Office to accommodate necessary storage of critical records and additional workspace for part time help and/or volunteers; the estimate for this work is around \$30,000.