

**EVERGREEN CEMETERY ASSOCIATION**  
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THANKSGIVING and the Change of Seasons

UPDATE - November 22, 2023

At a recent monthly meeting of the Board of Trustees it was decided to provide an update of happenings since our annual letter to Members and Friends of Evergreen Cemetery Association. It has been a busy spring, summer and fall for your Board. 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. To do so requires financial support from the community and we are especially THANKFUL this THANKSGIVING for the generous support of the Community.

1. Although our financial future remains uncertain, we are pleased that the Board of County Commissioners has provided \$20,000 of assistance for Memorial Gardens Cemetery in 2021, 2022 and 2023 and have responded favorably to our request for continued assistance for 2024. This assistance from the County has become critical in managing our cemeteries even though it is designated for Memorial Gardens since it is located outside the city limits. When you have the opportunity, say THANKS to your County Commissioner.
2. Associated with #1 above, the Trustees have proposed some statutory language changes for the upcoming Legislative session to allow the City of Brainerd to provide assistance for Evergreen Cemetery. You may wish to contact your City Council Member urging the City to provide assistance just as the County has.
3. There continues to be a demand for above ground inurnments of cremains. As a result, our second Columbarium was placed in October, just in time as we have only 3 niches remaining in the original one. A layout in Memorial Gardens along with landscaping plans have been developed for additional columbaria in the future. This addition to the services we offer is possible due to donations from Association members and friends – THANK YOU!
4. A much needed upgraded pickup truck for general maintenance including snowplowing within our cemeteries has been purchased. This critical piece of equipment presents a more favorable image to the public and more importantly it enhances safety for our employees. This too has been possible due to donations from the public – THANK YOU!

5. We continue working with an Arborist on tree trimming, tree removal and tree replacement to perpetuate the overall appearance of our cemeteries. Some of you have designated your gifts to planting of trees (as much as \$6,000 annually) and we will continue to honor these requests to the extent possible – THANK YOU!

6. It was necessary to replace our 45-year-old loader/backhoe as an axle broke and we were told a replacement one was not available. We negotiated with the local John Deere equipment dealer for an appropriate size unit at \$42,565 and entered into a 0% financing agreement for 5-years. We believe we will be able to meet the payment schedule of over \$500 per month. However, this will be a drag on our annual budget and will likely require using savings from donations and investment income. This is a great opportunity for those who are seeking a place to make a substantial gift for a non-profit, community need.

7. Office remodeling has been deferred for several years as we have struggled with the lack of funds to improve interior conditions of the office, including heating and air conditioning as well as electrical services. We do not have efficient workspace nor truly secure storage of critical records required to be preserved. The Board of Trustees recently approved moving forward with a remodel plan. Recognizing the financial restraints, we anticipate the desired work will be accomplished in phases and we anticipate that donations will provide the biggest share of the estimated cost of \$30,000 – THANK YOU!

8. Items #5, #6 and #7 above are opportunities along with general maintenance and grounds keeping for those who wish to support the Evergreen Cemetery Association. Please 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 have recently done. Also know that using QCDs (qualified charitable distributions) to manage your required minimum distributions from an IRA is available. A QCD allows individuals who are 70½ years old or older to donate up to \$100,000 total to one or more charities directly from a taxable IRA instead of taking their required minimum distributions. We express our heartfelt THANKS for the critical financial support many of you provide Evergreen Cemetery Association through your generous donations.

Should you have any questions or desire information related to your cemeteries, please don't hesitate to contact any of the Trustees or our Executive Director. Volunteers are always welcome for those who may wish to contribute their time and talents.

Sincerely,  
Your Board of Trustees