

# THE LINK

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE CANADIAN  
FUNERAL COOPERATIVES NETWORK

June 2010

## Fifth Meeting of the Funeral Cooperatives of Canada

Once a year, the Federation team travels to the Maritimes to lead a day and a half of meetings and conferences intended to be the equivalent of the annual congress that we organize in Quebec.

The next meeting will be held next October 15 and 16 in Tracadie-Sheila, New Brunswick. The host cooperative for this meeting will therefore be the Coopérative funéraire La Colombe.

The programme is currently being prepared, but at this time we are hoping to prick your interest a little. The surprising and more than satisfactory results of the survey on Quebecers' perceptions of funeral cooperatives will be presented. We believe that this province-wide survey can be applied in your provinces. Certain marketing avenues will also be raised.

Also, a presentation on the NPS (net promoter score) will show you the types of clients that we serve in our cooperatives – some who are profitable in our organizations, and others who are less so.

Also on the programme will be a presentation of the consolidated financial statements of the auxiliary member cooperatives. For this, we are asking all the Maritimes cooperatives to send us their financial statements for the years 2008 and 2009. We want to consolidate this data and allow for comparison. Rest assured that this data will be treated in confidence.

There will be a presentation on trends and new products available in the funeral industry, inspired by two major trade fairs that our team was able to attend: the exhibition of the National Funeral Directors Association in Boston (2009), and that of the Funeral Service Association of Canada at Mont-Tremblant (2010).

The complete and final programme will be sent to you at the end of August. As in years past, the meeting will start at 1:30 p.m. on October 15 and end late in the afternoon



of October 16. We are also planning a special activity for Friday evening dinner. For logistical reasons, however, we ask you to reserve your cottages with the Complexe Les Deux Rivières at 1-866-394-4050 before August 10, 2010. You can also visit the following Web site for further information: [www.complexe2rivieres.ca](http://www.complexe2rivieres.ca).

Hope to see you there in large numbers!



## The 16th Congress of the Federation

It was to Alma, in the lovely region of Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Quebec, that the directors and general managers of the Federation's member funeral cooperatives were invited for its annual congress. Over 90 delegates and close to 50 escorts responded positively to our invitation.

The congress was held last May 28, 29 and 30. On May



28, those attending the presidents' and general managers' meeting were able to learn more about the Co-operative Funeral Home in Sudbury, Ontario. **Mr. Daniel Johnston,**

General Manager of this cooperative, came to speak to the participants about the cooperative's development and the challenges it has to face. We were greatly honoured by his presence. Other items on the agenda were the presentation of the network's consolidated financial statements and the results of a major provincial survey on Quebecers' perceptions of funeral cooperatives, which was done in spring 2010.

On Saturday we had the benefit of four top-level workshops. One was on concrete actions to take for a viable and sustainable funeral cooperative. We had a presentation by two general managers who have found ways to build member loyalty. A lecture on pleasure and performance was given by Mr. Jean-Luc Tremblay, a well-known author and speaker in Quebec. Finally, Simon Fisher, General Manager of the Midcounties Co-operative Funeral Service in England, gave us a presentation on the cooperative sector in Britain, the Co-operative Funeral Service, and current issues.

The Saturday evening Gala honours those cooperatives that have achieved outstanding success. This year 12 cooperatives submitted their cases to the jury. Three of those 12 were from among our auxiliary members (East Prince, Serviperu, and People's Memorial). In addition to the two winning cooperatives, the jury members gave honourable mention to another one close to their heart: the East Prince Funeral Co-operative. Below we reproduce the text that was published in the delegates' programme.

### **East Prince: Bulk buying of caskets in PEI**

The East Prince Funeral Co-operative was founded in Summerside, PEI in 1989. It has two full-time and five part-time employees, plus a great many volunteers. It organizes about 80 funerals per year. To facilitate participation by Island cooperatives in the bulk buying of caskets, the director of this cooperative has built a garage/warehouse directly on its property to store caskets and supply the other cooperatives.

Finally, at the annual general meeting we had the pleasure of welcoming another auxiliary member cooperative to our ranks: the Funeral Co-operative of Ottawa. Still at the pre-start-up stage, this cooperative is currently engaged in a membership recruitment campaign. All the same, it already has over 100 members. Last year, this cooperative obtained a Co-operative Development Initiative grant which allowed it to acquire promotional tools, including a Web site, and to hire a resource in charge of member recruitment. Hoping to start up operations in 2011, the cooperative is calling upon anyone in the Ottawa region who would like to become a member to do so through this Web site:

[www.funeralcooperativeofottawa.coop](http://www.funeralcooperativeofottawa.coop).

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Mark Goldblatt, acting President of the Funeral Co-operative of Ottawa, receives his membership certificate from Réjean Laflamme and Alain Leclerc, respectively the president and CEO of the Federation of Funeral Cooperatives.

The Funeral Co-operative of Ottawa is the twelfth cooperative outside Quebec to become a member of the Federation, which now has a presence in three countries and in six provinces of Canada.

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## The Canadian tour continues

The Canadian tour made a stop in Vancouver in March. We invited representatives from all of that city's cooperative sectors. Over 25 persons from seven cooperative organizations attended the meeting. In addition to talking about funeral cooperatives and their advantages, we had a guest from Seattle. John Eric Rolfstad, Executive Director of the People's Memorial Funeral Cooperative, captivated his audience by sharing the experience of the People's Memorial Association, which upon finding itself with no funeral services provider was obliged to start up a funeral cooperative so as to continue to serve the approximately 80,000 members in Seattle. After three years in operation, this cooperative is already the leader in the metro Seattle market.



In April the tour went to Saskatoon, where nearly 15 persons came to learn more about funeral cooperatives. Jeannette Miller, from the Prairie Lily Funeral Co-operative in Regina, was also in attendance to share her experience in starting up a funeral cooperative.

In both cases, a group of three to five persons was formed to look more closely into the possibility of starting up a funeral cooperative in their locality.

The Canadian tour will be continuing in fall 2010. If you would like to invite our speaker to your community, don't hesitate to contact us at this e-mail address: [normandin.fcfq@reseaucoop.com](mailto:normandin.fcfq@reseaucoop.com)

## Does your logo make a good impression?

Is your logo muzzy? Do the colours that define it change with different applications? Does its font change from Times to Script, according to your mood? When you send a fax, does your logo appear clearly?

A veritable signature of the cooperative, the logo is the most important feature in defining the image of the organization. Yet it is also one of the most neglected features in the cooperative movement.

### What is a logo used for?

The logo presents a personality, a corporate identity, by means of a symbol or shape. It is the visual synthesis of the message the company sends out to the public. It evokes the company's business, values, specialization, personality, etc.

A logo cannot express everything. It must aim for what is essential. Too often we see complicated logos, where the company has tried to convey too many messages. The logo serves as a signature -- the signature for every commercial and advertising message. While it identifies the origin of your publicity messages, in no case can it replace them.

### The qualities of a good logo

**Simple:** To be easily seen, memorized and recognized, a logo must be simple. This will heighten its impact. A logo is not an illustration. It must not tell a story or an anecdote. It doesn't have time for that!

**Striking:** A logo that has impact will help your brand get noticed by its target audience. Your faxes, mail,

brochures and publicity will have more chance of being recognized.

**Evocative and meaningful:** A logo must have something to say. The ideas it conveys must be easily deduced or felt. The style (typography, artistic shape, colours, etc.) must be in line with the mission and image of the company (e.g. a jeweller or a funeral company will have a more sober logo than a jeans store).

**Long-lasting:** The longer a logo's life, the more benefits it will bring, for in this way the company capitalizes on perception and memorization. But be careful: longevity must not be sought at any price. While it is preferable not to change a good logo, one that has become dated should however be modernized or even replaced. Changing the logo just because the staff have gotten tired of it is a bad reason. A logo is made to last: hence the importance of investing in a quality logo.

**Easy to reproduce:** From the moment it is designed, a good logo should be able to maintain its legibility and shape no matter what it is used for. It should display well on photocopies and faxes. In addition, it must be useable on the company's various supports and media (stationery, stamps, signs, vehicles, uniforms, badges, brochures, pens and pins).

**Uniform from one use to another:** Graphic design firms always present their logo in colour on large white cardboard. Would you like to test this? Check out the design when it is small and black, as on a business card or at the bottom of a death notice.

### Modernizing your logo: a business decision

Does changing your logo seem to you too much of an expense? Perhaps you simply have a sentimental attachment to your logo? Consider that a bad or an antiquated logo does more harm than good to your cooperative. It presents an image of a company rooted in another time -- something you definitely do not want to project. Since your logo was designed, your services have become more professional, your décor has evolved, your image has been modernized, and your tools have been refined. Maybe it's time to offer your logo the youth treatment that will keep it in step with your development?

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