

Local Cemeteries In Need of Assistance

(KNZA)--Visits to area cemeteries will likely be on the increase this holiday weekend, as that tradition of Memorial Day continues for area families.

Bob Sines, a member of the Mount Hope Cemetery Board, is thanking those families who have, and those who will, provide donations and bequeathments, which is the only funding many cemeteries receive. "Our cemetery is a non profit organization," Sines tells MSC News. "Our goal is to be able to maintain the cemetery to the standards we all expect for our friends and loved ones. However, there's no source of income. Basically plots are sold but that certainly wouldn't cover even a small part really of what it costs to maintain a cemetery."

Sines says the rising cost of maintenance combined with the ongoing need for upkeep, has made for difficult financial times. "We have a hard time unless we have volunteers willing to go out and do some of the work themselves," Sines says. "We're reaching out to a number of people in the communities, and we're talking about specifically the Hiawatha Cemetery and Mount Hope Cemetery. Some of the rural family cemeteries are maintained by the families still. Some get some tax assistance in the counties, and so forth, [but] the Mount Hope and Hiawatha cemeteries do not receive tax assistance. They are solely on their own."

Sines encourages those families who utilize the unfunded cemeteries to donate whatever is possible, including memorials for loved ones and to consider the costs when conducting estate planning.

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