



# NEWS FROM SCDCA

SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### *Former Cheraw Funeral Home Owner Pleads Guilty; \$91,000 in Restitution Ordered*

**Columbia, SC...** On September 4, 2014, former owner of Norton Funeral Home, Hubert Craig Norton, plead guilty in Darlington County to eight counts of Breach of Trust and two counts of Preneed Funeral Contracts Law violations.

Norton received four consecutive 5 year sentences, totaling 20 years, suspended to 18 months in the SC Department of Corrections and five years of probation following his release. Norton was also ordered to pay at least \$91,000 in restitution to any individual victims during his probation period. This includes any victims with legitimate claims who come forward post plea. Monies will also be paid to the SC Department of Consumer Affairs (SCDCA) for claims paid from the Preneed Loss Reimbursement Fund to the estates of Norton's deceased victims. If Norton violates the terms of his probation, he will face an additional prison sentence of up to 18 ½ years.

SCDCA and the Cheraw Police Department began receiving consumer complaints after the close of Norton Funeral Home in August 2011. The complaints concerned funds paid in advance for preneed burial contracts. SCDCA's extensive investigation revealed that Norton sold preneed funeral contracts without a license and failed to put funds into a trust account. Norton was indicted on 106 counts in November 2012. The Chesterfield County Fourth Circuit Solicitor's office, SCDCA and the Cheraw Police Department worked together on the case.

The Preneed Funeral Contracts Law dates back to 1962, with SCDCA taking over as the administrator and enforcer in 2006. The most recent amendments to the law include steeper penalties for violators with the addition of two felony penalties. Consumers who believe they are victims of Mr. Norton's activities and have not yet filed a complaint with the Department can do so through our website at [www.consumer.sc.gov](http://www.consumer.sc.gov) or call 1-800-922-1594.

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SCDCA aims to protect consumers from inequities in the marketplace through advocacy, complaint mediation, enforcement and education. To file a complaint or get information on consumer issues, visit [www.consumer.sc.gov](http://www.consumer.sc.gov) or call toll-free, 1.800.922.1594.

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