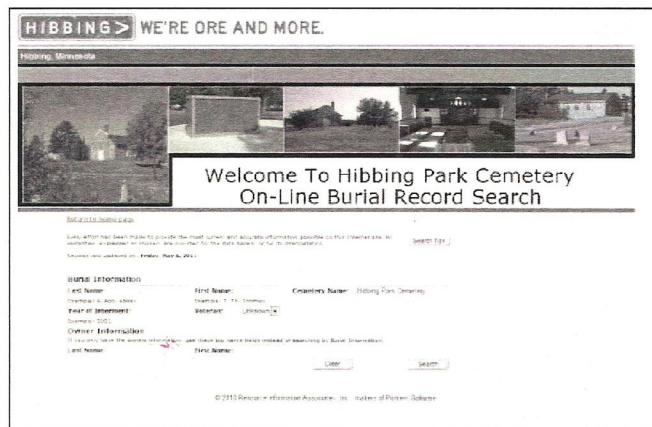# Getting Engaged. Minnesota Cemeteries Among Those Nationwide Saying, "I Do"

In the last two decades, communication and information technology has revolutionized the face and pace of the way we communicate and do business.

Today, consumers not only have the world at their fingertips, but they rely on and expect "instant gratification" when it comes to staying in touch, finding information, conducting personal business and making decisions.

Cemeteries across the nation that are discovering just how important "being engaged" in the digital revolution can be, including two Pontem Software clients in Minnesota that are among the latest to say "I do" by putting their cemetery's burial records and plot maps online.

Welcome To Hibbing Park Cemetery On-Line Burial Record Search

The City of Hibbing debuted its online burial search feature about a year ago after digitizing its records for both Old North Hibbing Cemetery and Maple Hill Park Cemetery.

"Everything we used to track on paper is now on the computer and instantly accessible," says Mike Haben, City of Hibbing Public Works Superintendent. "From maintaining genealogy information, performing daily searches, and even keeping track of information for funeral homes, the software has helped me in all aspects of my cemetery management position."

With Hibbing's new online burial record search option (www.hibbing.stlouis.mn.govern.com) the public can access cemetery records and view an interactive GIS map of the cemetery complete with burial record details.

When the Tower-Soudan Historical Society decided to undertake digitizing records for the City of Tower's Lakeview Cemetery the goal of the group's efforts was primarily to preserve the history of the area by documenting the lives of dozens of families, many of whom were drawn to this small northeastern Minnesota mining town more than a century ago.

After scanning scores of fragile, hand-written cemetery ledger books that dated back to the 1880s, the group realized what a treasure trove of information they had collected and decided to make their records available online (www.cityoftower.com/cemeteryrecords.html).

"An attorney from the East Coast working on a family estate contacted us to tell us how impressed he was to find a small town like ours had made this kind of information available," says Greta Tuominem, one of the project's key volunteers.

"It's not only possible for small towns and cemeteries to do what we did, it's something more and more cemeteries need and should continue to do because of how important the Internet has become," she explains.

Besides providing an invaluable public service and meeting consumer demand, according to Sherry T. Hood, president of Pontem Software, "getting engaged" also has economic benefits.

"After digitizing their records, one of the things our clients discover almost immediately is how much more efficient they are. What may have taken a staff member or volunteer hours or days to research can instantly be found with a click of a mouse, enabling cemeteries to do more with less.

"Add the power of the Internet which enables people to do their own burial record research, in today's world, cemeteries simply can't afford not to computerize their records and say: The Internet? Yes, we do!"

For more information about Pontem Software's flexible, affordable, and easy to use cemetery management software, including its popular Online Burial Search and Mapping features, visit www.pontem.com, or call 888.742.2378 toll-free.