

## Jordan, MN



Jordan Crematory Protesters

Open letter to Ballard-Sunder Funeral Home:  
On behalf of the business owners, residents and children of the City of Jordan, we are concerned about the plan to operate a crematory at the Ballard-Sunder funeral home in Jordan. This facility will add a new, permanent, ongoing source of pollution which will immediately impact our community. In fact, the mere plan for this crematory has already impacted many of our lives. Directly across the street from the Ballard-Sunder funeral home is a daycare and families who have young children. Behind the property runs Sand Creek, a protected waterway which flows through wetlands into the Minnesota River. Within a short distance (500') is the Mill Pond and Lagoon Park where people come to fish at the pier, swim and picnic with their families. Less than 1/50th of a teaspoon of mercury per 20-acre lake surface is enough to make the fish in it unsafe for human consumption. Blocks away from the crematory are important recreational facilities like Jordan's own Mini-Met where outdoor baseball games and tournaments take place all summer long. Within walking distance are our public library, dance studio, karate studio, skateboarding park, hockey rink, skating rink, daycare centers, school bus stops and St Johns Church and School where children are present daily. Many of our community events bring the public to within feet of the funeral home such as Heimatfest and Parade, Jordan High School homecoming parade, the Jordan Valley Bike Tour, Pork in the Park, the Art Festival and St John's Church Festival. We have hopes for Jordan to become a Hub for biking and trails, and our city has invested in planning to attract visitors to our charming small town, to enjoy trails that will run right past the crematory. All of these outdoor activities people attend with the assumption the air they breathe is safe. When the elements of a sheltered valley where crematory emissions will be carried by prevailing winds and combine with the common occurrence of air inversions it will mean these pollutants will be concentrated in the fallout on our homes and properties. Along with residential areas there are churches, schools, the food shelf, restaurants and other businesses in this sheltered valley. At the very least, a crematory would be considered by many to be nuisance. People would be unable to enjoy their properties and many may have to sell at a decreased value, which ultimately would lower the city's property tax

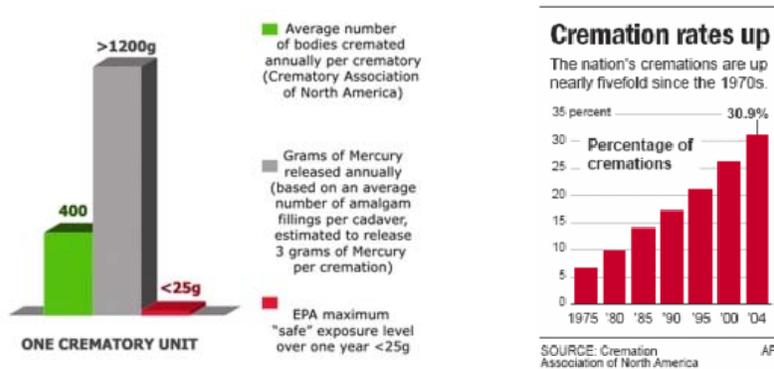
base. Simply put, the operation of a crematory at this location will hurt the community of Jordan as a whole. It amounts to an incompatible land use.



According to Jordan City Ordinance: § 90.002 NUISANCES.

(A) A nuisance shall mean any substance, matter, emission or thing which creates a dangerous or unhealthy condition or which threatens the public peace, health, safety, or sanitary condition of the city or which is offensive or has a blighting influence on the community and which is found upon, in, being discharged or flowing from any street, alley, highway, railroad right-of-way, vehicle, railroad car, water, excavation, building, erection, lot, grounds, or other property located within the city.

We have seen sufficient evidence in the form of scientific studies and expert opinions to warrant our concerns. Crematory emissions contain known toxins, including mercury from dental amalgam fillings, cadmium, lead, dioxins, furans, hydrogen chloride, nitrogen oxides and other pollutants at levels exceeding National Air Quality Guidelines and those put out by the State of Minnesota. Heavy metals and PCDD/Fs stand out because of their toxicity and capacity for bioaccumulation, which means chronic and ongoing potential risks for human health exist, even at the disputably low levels the industry represents. EPA has reportedly been talking to some of the larger volume crematories in MN about ways they can reduce their mercury emissions, because of the large number of protected watershed areas across the state.



We are aware and have been earnestly communicating to the officials in MN about current scientific findings which indicate levels of mercury from crematory emissions are

eleven times higher than the data used by the EPA when they made the decision over ten years ago not to regulate crematories under the Clean Air Act, Solid Waste Incinerators category. This decision was data from a single test at a single crematory. Whether or not a crematory is officially called a solid waste incinerator, it is still an incinerator and should not be allowed to operate in a C1 Neighborhood Business zone, near so many homes and children. Jordan's own building inspector has classified this crematory as an incinerator.

There has not been one single scientific study that concludes crematory emissions are safe. The World Health Organization has stated "a safe level of mercury exposure ... has never been established." The data being provided by the crematory industry is outdated, incorrect and amounts to a mix of marketing materials and a few selective tests done on new units as they were being installed. Testing was not done for the toxins of concern. Mercury is a known neurotoxin which affects developing fetuses and young children even at low levels of exposure. Dioxins are known to cause cancer and birth defects. Human health is compromised by significantly smaller concentrations of these toxins than ever imagined. In summary, there is enough scientific data to indicate the potential for harm to human health from living near a crematory is very real. There is good reason to expect in the future stricter regulations on crematory emissions are coming, but they are not in place yet. We are just not willing to allow this crematory to become established in Jordan, only to later learn our health and properties have been adversely impacted.

Since cremation rates are only expected to continue to rise and because Ballard-Sunder funeral homes serve two other communities besides Jordan, the estimated number of 50 cremations annually is not logical from a business standpoint. We believe the number will be significantly higher. A business owner has a right to expand and grow, but our constitution protects us as property owners from the negative impact of a land use that is too intense for the surrounding area. At this time we are asking all of our neighbors, along with government officials at every level to take the time to investigate all of the current information, so they make an informed decision as to what is right for this community and other communities like us in the future. We realize people will continue to want cremation to be available. Cremation services are something we believe should be available to those who choose that option. We have never been against cremation or the funeral industry, nor are we against this specific establishment. We had considered Ballard-Sunder a good neighbor until now. The fact there are currently no regulations on crematory emissions deeply concerns us. Lack of regulations is NOT an endorsement of safety. We cannot wait until government agencies catch up to the science. This is a risk we are not willing to take with our families' health and our financial future. Please find another location for the crematory located is a minimum of one half mile from any homes, school and protected wetlands located would be downwind. People will not only travel for cremation services, they will appreciate the funeral director and his establishment for showing concern about the health and safety of the community. Jordan Community Action Group can be reached by email at [12JCAG@gmail.com](mailto:12JCAG@gmail.com). For source information related to this document please go online to [www.no2crematory.wordpress.co/the-toxic-truth-data/](http://www.no2crematory.wordpress.co/the-toxic-truth-data/)