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# St. Cloud Times

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## Company starts national cremation placement day

Charles Rankin

St. Cloud Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

The first National Cremation Placement Day will take place Oct. 17, 2026.

The observance will be then held annually on the third Saturday in October. It was established and registered by Coldspring, which is headquartered in Cold Spring, Minnesota.

The holiday was created to mark the 150th anniversary of cremation in America and to raise awareness about the importance of placing and memorializing

cremated remains.

Cremation has become the most common form of disposition in the United States, but millions of cremated remains are kept in homes or passed down without clear plans, often not due to a lack of care, but because families often lack guidance and support.

National Cremation Placement Day encourages community memorial services that provide families with a way to gather and remember.

The day aims to increase awareness of permanent

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An urn arc on display at Haisley Funeral & Cremation Service, Oct. 22, in Fort Pierce. An urn arc is a ceremonial display case for a cremation urn that allows it to be carried by pallbearers.

CRYSTAL VANDER WEIT/TCPALM

## Be The Hope Music Fest to launch this weekend



Place of Hope is renovating its 121 Park Avenue South building in St. Cloud. COREY SCHMIDT/ST. CLOUD TIMES

## Funds raised to benefit Place of Hope housing

Champ Howard

Special to the St. Cloud Times | USA TODAY NETWORK

Place of Hope will be holding its first Be the Hope Music Festival fundraiser on July 11 at Iron Street Distillery, with a goal of raising \$50,000.

Including headliners Charlie Roth and Paul "Stretch" Diethelm, the festival will feature over 20 artists performing across three stages from 2 to 9 p.m. Members of the community are also invited to join and perform at the open mic, according to the organization's press release.

Iron Street Distillery will feature a limited menu of food and drinks alongside food trucks scattered across the event, according to owner Julie Johnson. The event will also feature a kid-friendly area with a bounce house and face painting.

"You come in and enjoy the music, buy some food at the food trucks, use the QR code and donate to Place of Hope..." Johnson said. "All the money goes to Place of Hope. We are just trying to help them get some additional funds to keep doing the good work they are do-

ing."

Place of Hope was opened by Pastor Carol Jean Smith and her husband Pastor Geary Smith in 1997. The couple's main reason for fundraising is improving housing and upgrading the facilities to hold more people at Compassionate Hope Family Center located at 121 Park Ave. S., St. Cloud.

Currently, Compassionate Hope Family Center can only house single women on one of its floors. Smith is hopeful that the fundraiser will allow it to get the funds needed to finish renovations and allow families to have housing by the end of August.

"We are trying to get the kids in a place before school starts," Smith said.

Smith estimated it will take roughly \$200,000 to completely finish the renovations.

The idea for a fundraiser came about after Roth drove a woman back to St. Cloud after playing a wedding in the Brainerd Lakes Area. After hearing about Smith and Place of Hope, Roth realized a fundraiser was well deserved, calling Smith his "very own Mother Teresa."

Roth talked to Smith, and the idea for the fundraiser was started. Roth had played at the Iron Street Distillery in the past, so he also talked to Johnson

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## Trump 'not sure' he wants deal with Iran

Number of U.S. service members killed rises to 14

Francesca Chambers, Erin Mansfield, Zac Anderson, Bart Jansen, Chris Cann, Joey Garrison and Rachel Barber

USA TODAY

President Donald Trump said he's no longer sure he wants to negotiate a peace deal with Iran as he called Tehran's leaders "sick people" and signaled he would rather end the conflict militarily, casting major doubt whether the U.S. ceasefire with Iran will hold.

"I'm not sure I want to make a deal," Trump said July 8 at a news conference at the NATO summit in Ankara, Turkey. "Let's just finish the job."

Asked whether he's restarting the U.S. war on Iran, Trump pushed back. "I don't think it's going to start again," he said. "Anything that happens, it's going to be over very quickly."

Trump's remarks came as he threatened a second night of air strikes on Iran after the two sides traded strikes following a series of attacks on tankers in the Strait of Hormuz that the United States blamed on Iran.

"To me, I think it's over. I don't want to deal with them," Trump said earlier in the day on the status of a preliminary agreement reached in June that established a 60-day ceasefire and reopened the Strait of Hormuz while talks on a long-term deal addressing Iran's nuclear capability were to continue.

When Trump signed the "memorandum of understanding" with Iran in June, the president called Iranian leaders "very rational," "strong," "smart" and "nice to deal with."

But as the preliminary peace deal appeared on the verge of crumbling July 8, Trump had very different descriptions: "They're scum. They're sick people. They're led by sick people, and they're vicious, violent people."

So, what changed?

"I got to know them," Trump said when a reporter asked this question. He said that the current leaders in Iran are more rational than previous leaders who were killed during the war, but also appeared to threaten Iran's new leadership.

"They had leaders, they're gone," Trump said. "And they had another set of leaders, they're gone. Now they have another set of leaders, they may be gone. Who knows?"

"And you know what? I may be gone, too," Trump added. "Because I'm their number one target."

The United States targeted Iran's leadership at the start of the Iran war, killing Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Iran's new leadership recently held a funeral for Khamenei that drew large crowds.

The ongoing conflict around the Strait of Hormuz and escalating U.S. response underscored the

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