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RESPONDENT

1. The Board is an agency of the State of Missouri, established and existing pursuant to Mo. Rev. Stat. § 333.151, for the purpose of administering and enforcing Chapter 333 and portions of Chapter 436, Mo. Rev. Stat., and the regulations promulgated thereunder. It has authority to license and regulate those persons in the businesses of embalming and funeral directing in Missouri.
2. The Board's principal office and place of business is located at 3605 Missouri Boulevard, Jefferson City, Missouri, 65102-0423.
3. The Board is comprised of six members; one public member and five members that hold a license in either funeral directing or embalming, or both. Each member is appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the state senate.
4. Except to the ex

in other states from selling funeral caskets to Missouri consumers at need, and affected interstate commerce in funeral merchandise in neighboring states.

10. The Federal Trade Commission has jurisdiction of the subject matter of this proceeding and of Respondent, and the proceeding is in the public interest.

THE CHALLENGED CONDUCT

11. The “practice of funeral directing” is defined in Mo. Rev. Stat. § 333.011(7) (2005) as “[E]ngaging by an individual in the business of preparing, otherwise than by embalming, for the burial, disposal or transportation out of this state of, and the directing and supervising of the burial or disposal of, dead human bodies or engaging in the general control or supervision or management of the operations of a funeral establishment.”

12. Mo. Rev. Stat. § 333.251 (2005) states that: “Nothing in this chapter shall apply to nor in any manner interfere with the duties of any officer of local or state institutions, nor shall this chapter apply to any person engaged simply in the furnishing of burial receptacles for the dead, but shall only apply to persons engaged in the business of embalming or funeral directing.”

13. Beginning on or about June 30, 1998, and continuing through approximately July 29, 2004, Regulation 4 CSR 120-2.060(18) stated that: “No person other than a duly licensed and registered funeral director may make the following at-need arrangements with the person having the right to control the incidents of burial: . . . (C) For the sale or rental to the public of funeral merchandise, services or paraphernalia from a funeral establishment.”

14. Prior to July 30, 2004, Regulation 4 CSR 120-2.060 (18) prohibited the sale of at-need funeral merchandise “from a funeral establishment” by anyone other than a licensed funeral director.

15. Beginning on or about July 30, 2004, and continuing through approximately September 29, 2006, 4 CSR 120-2.060(18) stated that: “No person other than a Missouri licensed funeral director shall be allowed to make the following at-need arrangements with the person having the right to control the incidents of disposition: . . . (C) Sale or rental to the public of funeral merchandise, services or paraphernalia.”

16. During the process leading up to the amendment of 4 CSR 120-2.060 that took effect in July 2004, the Board sought to amend other portions of the regulation but not 4 CSR 120-2.060(18)(C).

17. After the period for public comments for amending 4 CSR 120-2.060 was completed, the Board amended subsection 4 CSR 120-2.060(18)(C) by deleting the phrase “from a funeral establishment.”

VIOLATION

23. The combination, conspiracy, acts and practices described above constitute anticompetitive and unfair methods of competition in violation of Section 5 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. § 45. Such combination, conspiracy, acts, and practices or the effects thereof, continued for approximately two years and may recur in the absence of the relief herein requested.

WHEREFORE, THE PREMISES CONSIDERED, the Federal Trade Commission on this nineteenth day of June, 2008, issues its Complaint against Respondent Missouri Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors.

By the Commission.

C. Landis Plummer
Acting Secretary

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