

Anderson & Sons Mortuary, American Fork, Utah

Each year, the American Fork Fire Department hosts a Memorial Day breakfast at the fire station across from our mortuary. It's a long-standing tradition in our community—an event that brings people together in remembrance and celebration. In the past, we've simply opened up our parking lot to the public to help with the overflow of attendees. But this year, we wanted to do something a little more meaningful. We decided to use this exposure with the fire department to create a community-centered open house in conjunction with their annual breakfast.

While the firemen served their traditional breakfast, we opened our funeral home for our second annual art exhibit titled *We Remember*. We invited the community to come inside after breakfast to enjoy the artwork and vote for their favorite pieces. We were thrilled with the turnout—each submitting up to two original pieces, including paintings and photographs. The funeral home was transformed into a gallery space with display tables and signage, listing each work's title, the artist's name, and the medium used. Visitors were given a voting card where they could select their favorite art piece. Additionally, we included an optional section where guests could leave their contact information if they were interested in learning more about preneed services. This was a subtle but thoughtful way to introduce the idea of planning ahead, without taking away from the creative and uplifting spirit of the event. There was also a raffle for a NexGrill for filling out the forms. Everyone was included whether they wanted preneed planning or not as long as they were over 18 years old.

The response from the community was incredibly positive. Many people expressed how much they appreciated the opportunity to walk through the exhibit and see the talent of local artists. A few attendees took the opportunity to fill out their information for preneed follow-up, and some even scheduled appointments in the days that followed. We were grateful for both the interest and the engagement. Later, we counted the votes and were able to announce a winner Ann Newman with her piece "On The Lord's Watch" and a runner-up Natalie Harness and her pictures "Memories". Both artists were presented with awards and were genuinely excited and honored to have their work recognized. It was a wonderful moment that added a personal and celebratory touch to the overall event.

Overall, the collaboration was a success, and we received several comments from visitors saying they hope they can enter some art in next years contest. We're already looking forward to building on this year's success and making next year's event even more memorable.

Copeland Funeral Service, Beaufort, South Carolina

ANNUAL FIRE SERVICE BAR-B-Q

In 2011, we sponsored our first annual Fire Service Bar-B-Q for ALL career and volunteer fire service personnel in Beaufort County. The annual Bar-B-Q is held during Fire Prevention Week in October. The event is held at the Lady's Island Fire Department Headquarters on Lady's Island, South Carolina. There are twenty fire departments in Beaufort County. A few weeks before the Bar-B-Q, we send an invitation to all the fire chiefs in the county to let them know the day of the event and to ask them to provide us with a count of the personnel who will be eating.

Our menu includes a half of bar-b-q chicken, potato salad, baked beans, bread, ice tea and cake for desert. Prior to the day of the BBQ our funeral home orders and pays for all food and supplies. We take all food and supplies and meet at headquarters bright and early on the morning of the BBQ. We will usually start around 06:00 and we are usually finished serving and eating by 14:00. We assist Chief Bruce Kline of the Lady's Island/St. Helena Fire Department and Chief Josh Horton of the Fripp Island Fire Department with the cooking. While some of us are cooking, the others are setting up the tables and chairs, packaging the baked beans and potato salad, and cutting the cake. Some of the dinners are take out. Copeland Funeral Service logo was added to the carry- out containers.

In 2013, (our third year), we included all communications, Fire Commissioners, and Emergency Medical Services staff persons.. We are trying to gradually increase our invitees and one day plan to include the law enforcement officers in our county. Our first year, there were approximately one hundred fifty dinners served. This past year, the BBQ was held on October 15, 2024, and we served just over three hundred fifty dinners.

This is a service provided by our funeral home and is done without any cost to our friends in public service. This has been a very positive outreach for our funeral home. We have received a large number of "thank you" from the departments and individuals. On March 15, 2012, Copeland Funeral Service received a plaque from the Beaufort County Fire Chiefs Association. On the plaque it states "We present this plaque to show our gratitude for generosity and support to the firefighters of Beaufort County." We are committed to continuing with this appreciation dinner.

The J.F. Floyd Mortuary, Spartanburg, South Carolina

Floyd's Greenlawn Chapel, Spartanburg, South Carolina; Floyd's Boiling Spring Chapel, Boiling Springs, South Carolina; Floyd's Pacolet Chapel, Pacolet, South Carolina

Annual First Responders Picnic

In September of 2024, we decided to put on our first annual First Responders Picnic for Spartanburg County, Greenville County, and Cherokee County. We invited all first responders from the city and county departments to include: law enforcement, dispatch, firefighters, paramedics, military, corrections, public works, and search and rescue. As the only active-duty soldier at Floyd's Mortuary, this picnic was especially important for me to be apart of to bring together our funeral home and the First Responders and their families. A month before the picnic our funeral home sent out flyers to all the local stations and offices to spread the word; we wanted to show them our support and gratitude. We also promoted the picnic through our social media and word of mouth by friends and employees. The picnic was to be held at Floyd's Greenlawn Chapel in Spartanburg, SC. We had tents set up outside for shade with tables and chairs for everyone to relax and enjoy the food and company. We had music playing on speakers for everyone to enjoy, we set up corn hole boards for teams to play, we made little treat bags for families that brought their children and also set out grab bags for the adults to take with them. All the employees were dressed in their J.F. Floyd volunteer shirts and were set up in different areas to help. We had people setting up food, plates and cutlery; a team set up for drinks; and a team set up to decorate and tear down afterwards. Our menu consisted of several options between pulled and sliced barbecue with an array of sauces to suit everyone, chicken fingers, macaroni and cheese, baked beans, rolls, iced tea and sodas, and banana pudding for dessert. The food order was set up a few days beforehand and paid for by the funeral home. For those that could not stay to eat we had to go boxes for them to take with them.

Spartanburg County Dispatch and the Coroner's Office were not able to attend so we prepared boxes for them and delivered them to their locations. We were able to serve and support around one hundred and fifty First Responders with this first picnic and we are hoping for a bigger turnout next year. We wanted to put on this picnic not only to show our appreciation for all of their hard work for our community but to let them know we stand behind them and the least we could do for them was a free meal with some kind words and company. This will continue to be an outreach our funeral home expands on. The Spartanburg County Coroner, Rusty Clevenger, reached out to express his thanks for our time and support. We received many thank you's that day and a few days after as word spread of what we had done. Our funeral home will continue our dedication and support each year for our First Responders.

Paradise Memorial Funeral and Cremation Services, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Leon L. Williamson Funeral Home, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

As we continue to navigate a world that may sometimes seem cold, it is important to let others know that they are indeed appreciated. In an effort to display our gratitude for our local law enforcement, Paradise Memorial Funeral Home hosted our Law Enforcement Appreciation Luncheon.

The special event was held on April 2, 2025 and was designed to recognize the courage, service and sacrifices of the men and women who serve in law enforcement. The luncheon was simply designed to strengthen the bond between law enforcement and the community while enjoying a hot meal. We humbly recognize the sleepless nights, daily stress and daily struggles that accompany the job.

The event began at 11 AM with food catered by Nino's Southern Sides. The food included chicken, fish, Mac and cheese, greens, water, soda and desert. During the event, we fed over 200 law enforcement representatives. These representatives included officers, detectives, dispatchers, office personnel and retirees. We were graced by a retired officer of over 45 years. Throughout the day, many officers and members started to attend. At one point in the day, there were over 100 officers in our facility at one time.

Many officers chose to sit and enjoy their hot meal while conversing with officers they have not seen in a while. We were graced with the presence of Milwaukee Chief of Police Jeffrey Norman. We also welcomed with open arms Milwaukee County Sheriff Danita Ball. Both were very grateful for this gesture and took photos with some staff.

As the event concluded, the officers stated that this act of kindness has not been present of late and they truly appreciated our kindness. As we navigate in a world that sometimes seems cold, it is important to let others know that they are loved. Law Enforcement agents have an extremely difficult job. They often work hand in hand with funeral homes. They are always present for first calls at homes, they sometimes escort families to the cemetery, they are called to assist with traffic concerns during processions and even called for safety when families are having issues. Ultimately, they make the everyday activity funeral homes face with families easier.

Being in a family full of law enforcement, I see their struggles daily and a small gesture of a simple meal, could be the difference between a good day and a bad day. It is our hope that other acts of kindness continue to encourage our law enforcement and assure them that they are honored and respected as they deserve to be.