Cameron Parish faces quandary following Ike

By Phyllis Walters

It’s the same old song down in south Louisiana. A major hurricane strikes a blow and caskets pop out of the ground and float miles away. Days, weeks and even months later, they’re found in trees, under cars, stuck in the mud and way out in the marshlands.

Once again, funeral home owner and director Zeb Johnson of Calcasieu Parish reaches out and assists the coroner’s office in Cameron Parish to face an uphill battle in recovery efforts. It’s a mission of trying to locate caskets and get them re-buried since Hurricane Ike arrived in September. “We had approximately 250 bodies that were displaced from 47 cemeteries. About 50 of those bodies remained right in the cemetery or just partially out of the grave, so we were able to re-bury those fairly quick.”

Johnson says that about 95 percent of the bodies that have been recovered are identified. “Of the bodies that have been recovered, 80 percent of them were previously displaced from Hurricane Rita that hit in 2005. They were all re-buried then. This time for Hurricane Ike, they were easily identified because of a tagging system put into place.”

Comparing Rita to Ike

When Hurricane Rita disturbed and displaced hundreds and hundreds of bodies in September 2005, the cost to gather them and return the caskets back to their resting ground was $175,000. An anonymous donor in the area asked what he could do to help which prompted local officials to put his money to good use. “But there’s no money forthcoming for Ike,” says Johnson. “The State thinks we can get it done without their assistance.”

This time around, the Governor’s office has refused to speak to the authorities in Cameron Parish, denying their numerous requests. Johnson says the only governmental help has come by way of the prison in DeQuincy where inmates are sent to aid in the recovery of bodies out in the marsh areas. They arrive in airboats with retrieval teams and return to the cemetery to once again prepare the grounds for burial.

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When I meet friends and colleagues throughout the state, or even talking to people on the LFDA telephone line, they sometimes ask questions of me that only an expert can answer … an expert who is versed on funeral home laws and what is fact or fiction.

I refer them on to our Louisiana State Board offices in Metairie where staffers have legal counsel, and are sure to steer them in the right direction.

Within our state board office staff is Jude Daigle who is the Louisiana State Board Inspector. Jude has been making his rounds to all funeral homes throughout the state for the past three years. Prior to that position, he was a 30-year licensed funeral director and embalmer.

In talking to Jude one on one he spoke about some of the most frequent questions presented to him. “One of the topics that comes up a lot concerns removing bodies across state lines. There is much confusion as to how this should be handled.” He cited this instance, “Shreveport and Texas are located close together. If a funeral director has a client who passes away in Louisiana, within the first 24 hours he can carry that body across the state lines to Texas without being embalmed, providing he has a funeral director in Louisiana procure a burial/transit permit for him. If the time goes beyond 24 hours, the deceased must be embalmed, and the burial-transit permit is still required.”

Jude also says there is some clarification needed on dis-interment and re-interments. “If you dis-inter a person and move him from one location to another within the same cemetery, the presence of a licensed funeral director is not required. However, if your intentions are to move that person’s remains to another cemetery, a licensed funeral director is mandatory at both ends.”

This is good information to know. For the next couple of newsletters, I will continue my conversation with Jude. If you have a question that needs clearing up, feel free to call me at the LFDA office 337-289-5950 and I’ll be sure to get an answer for publication in the next quarterly publication. If you need to speak to Jude directly, call him at the Louisiana State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors office in Metairie, 504-452-0057.
A message from the president’s office

Today, as I write this article, the Dow dropped below 10,000 for the first time in four years. Around the world, we are seeing lack of confidence in financial institutions.

As funeral professionals, we know all too well about cycles. We all know how cycles affect our business. We talk about it all the time. Life happens in cycles.

If you read about the Great Depression, you will learn that there were many causes. Classic economist will point to the gold standard, bank failures, etc. Under consumption and over investment are called to blame. Keynesian economist say, the culprit is due to malfeasance by bankers and industrialists. The 1920s were referred to as the Roaring 20s. Consumers relied on cheap credit. Does this sound familiar?

We are paying too much for energy. Gas and diesel prices have risen dramatically in such a short time. If you have looked at your utility bill, we are paying more in fuel adjustments than in metered charges. As a result, prices for everything have risen. People do not have the money to pay for other expenses.

My wife Debbie and I have been fortunate to have traveled extensively in North American and abroad. One of my fondest memories was a trip which included the Black Hills in South Dakota. We were on a western US and Canada trip in our RV with our boys and a niece. We stayed in the town of Deadwood and visited Mt. Rushmore and Custer State Park. We then went to the Crazy Horse monument and I was moved when I read the inscription on the monument. The monument is that of Crazy Horse pointing with an outstretched arm. When asked where are your lands now? Crazy Horse pointed and said: “My lands are where my dead are buried.”

You can travel the world over, but you will never find a country that has been blessed by God more than the United States of America. With all of our problems and differences, please do not lose sight of the fact that these blessings are because we have been one nation under God.

Our land is hurting! We need to pray!

May God bless you and may God bless our nation.
Going Green – The industry is now on “green” alert.

“Green” funerals are just over the horizon, according to many industry leaders. With this trend on the rise, NFDA gathered information to help the funeral directors understand what “green” means to them.

NFDA spokesman Jim Olson, a funeral director in Sheboygan, Wis., along with his task force have put together a list of questions and answers about “green” funeral homes and funerals. These topics should be helpful in serving “green” families.

• What is a “green” funeral home?
   A “green” funeral home is one that implements energy-efficient and resource-saving practices - and doing this in a sustainable manner that does not negatively affect your bottom line.

• What is a “green” funeral?
   There are several options to creating a “green” funeral. It may consist of a small gathering of friends and family in a natural setting, and/or using only recycled paper products, locally grown organic flowers, carpooling, organic food, no embalming, biodegradable clothing and a biodegradable casket.

• What is a “green” cemetery?
   A “green” cemetery uses no herbicide, pesticides or installed irrigation for maintenance. Burial vaults, non-biodegradable caskets, as well as permanent markers are not permitted. A loved one’s grave is marked only by GPS coordinates.

• Is cremation considered “green?”
   This may surprise you, but no, because the cremation process uses nonrenewable fossil fuel.

• What alternatives to formaldehyde are available to preserve a body for viewing?
   The three options currently available are refrigeration, dry ice and formaldehyde-free fluids.

These topics, and more, were discussed at the national convention in Orlando. The word “green” had an eerie familiarity, just as the word “cremation” did several years ago. At that time, the industry was reactive. Now we have an opportunity to be proactive and positively serve our families who choose “green” services.

My personal thought is that “green” does not mean inexpensive. “Green” products – whether at the supermarket or a car dealership - tend to cost more than those items deemed environmentally unfriendly.

To be “green” is a choice and I think we in the industry should be prepared to accommodate those families who choose that lifestyle and choose to carry that lifestyle to their graves.

We must be able to confidently present their “green” options just as we do our families who choose traditional funerals.

The convention addressed many other topics and concerns about going “green” and for additional information contact the NFDA.

Allied Memberships

NFDA has created a task force to study the effects of allowing allied memberships into our organization. Most of the policy board members feel that permitting vendors, hospices, authors, etc., to join as allied members will lesson the integrity of this organization. It will be interesting to see which direction the task force goes. I will keep you informed.

There was a request from an independent funeral director association in Florida to join NFDA and have representation on the Policy Board and the House of Delegates, while at the national convention. The House of Delegates voted against allowing more than one state organizations to join NFDA. This of course does not permit any funeral director from joining as an individual.

If you have any further question, please contact me at HYPERLINK "mailto: craiggill@bellsouth.net" craiggill@bellsouth.net. It is a pleasure serving you.
Reference is made to LA R.S. 37:844 entitled Renewals, which provides as follows:

"Every certificate holder under this Chapter who wishes to continue the practice of the science of embalming or the practice of funeral directing shall pay to the secretary of the board on or before December 31 of each year the renewal fee provided in R.S. 37:845. Certificates not renewed by December 31 of any year shall be considered automatically revoked."

As such, you should consider this as a reminder of the provisions of Louisiana state law. Be advised that your failure to forward your renewal to the board in a timely fashion so as to be renewed by December 31 of each and every year shall result in reinstatement fees being assessed.
A pplauding employee success and improvement is a necessary component of any business, so why then is recognition becoming extinct? According to a recent poll conducted by the Funeral Directors Workforce Retention Study, 97 percent of owners say they “adequately recognize their employees’ work.” However, a striking mere 60 percent of licensed employees and managers feel they are being recognized. Further, while 82 percent of owners say they use verbal recognition to applaud their workers, only 33 percent of employees say that they receive verbal recognition. A disappointing 25 percent claim to receive no recognition for their work.

As with any business, customers are a first priority. But employees make up a large percentage of a company’s success as well! When an employee is happy and content with the company, it is apparent to everyone he or she comes into contact with whether it be a family member or a third party. Employees reflect back onto the funeral home.

Employees are not motivated strictly by money; modern employees are motivated by mutual respect. When respect is lacking, service is substandard simply because employees feel no need to go above and beyond their limits. But where does this lack of motivation come from? If the poll results from the Workforce Retention Study are any indication, this de-motivation falls to the blame of management.

Funeral service is one of those rare professions directly chosen by the individuals—one doesn’t fall into it accidentally. Embalming is rarely a fallback career, and an individual doesn’t take a part-time job one day and then 20 years later realize they are still there. Funeral directors choose this job consciously and stick with it.

Unfortunately, it is also a demanding, tiring and exhausting job physically, mentally and spiritually. Therefore, funeral firms should focus on motivating and encouraging their employees because they are the heart of the business; without them, families would have no one to turn to when the need calls. When I was in funeral school, a sign hung above our prep room door reminding us that we had, in our hands, a family’s most prized treasure. Every time I read it, I was motivated to do a good job and to please my instructor, the deceased’s family and myself. Because of that simple sign, I had a clear tangible reason for being there.

In 2006, an article by David Scrota, Louis A. Mischkind and Michael Irwin Meltzer placed the blame for discouraged employees “squarely at the feet of management.” In “Why Your Employees Are Losing Motivation,” the Authors identified three major goals of people in the workforce:

1) Equity - to be respected and treated fairly;
2) Achievement - to be proud of one’s job, accomplishments and employer; and
3) Camaraderie - to have good productive relationships with fellow colleagues. As a manager, ask yourself: are my employees treated fairly? Do I congratulate them on a job well done? Is there a positive atmosphere in the firm’s office?

Providing recognition, whether written or verbally, is one of the top ways to motivate employees. A simple pat on the back or a note expressing gratitude will make employees feel wanted and appreciated. Oftentimes, feedback is warranted only when someone misses the mark and makes a mistake but this doesn’t have to be the case. Feedback is important and accepted whether positive or negative. For new directors and residents, “report cards” can be especially helpful; every experience offers a chance for learning and improvement!

I was shocked to read: there’s a major gap between managers claiming to give recognition and employees refuting that claim.

Motivation and recognition need not be costly or inconvenient. Motivation, teamwork and company pride all go together to create a strong working environment. A positive working atmosphere will translate to your families who in turn will receive outstanding customer service.
Newspapers and television reports during the past 10 years confirm what every casual observer of American society already realizes: Americans increasingly wrestle with obesity. The number of individuals classified as “obese” has climbed to 25 percent of the U.S. Population, or about 93 million people. By 2010, that number is estimated to climb as high as 120 million.

Of even greater concern, from a health-risk standpoint, is the increase in “morbid obesity.” Approximately 4.7 percent of American adults are classified as morbidly obese, which is defined as those with a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or more. [Editor’s note: BMI is defined as a statistical measure of the weight of a person scaled according to their height. It is used as a simple means of classifying inactive individuals of an average body composition according to their body fat content.] Other definitions include anyone weighing at least 100 pounds above their ideal body weight.

Morbid obesity imposes serious health risks, especially when paired with obesity-related diseases, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, gall bladder disease, sleep apnea and osteoarthritis.

Obesity impacts the funeral profession in several ways. First, obesity causes an estimated 400,000 deaths in the U.S. each year and might soon eclipse smoking as the leading cause of preventable death. Second, obesity cases pose several logistical problems for funeral homes from both a service and product standpoint. Due to a soaring need for oversized caskets, funeral homes and casket manufacturers have responded. For example, last year, Batesville Casket Company rolled out 53 oversized models through its new “Dimensions” brand. Funeral homes that offered one or two oversized caskets by special order several years ago now stock oversized caskets in inventory and provide numerous selection options.

The obesity epidemic also impacts cemeteries. Some cemeteries have increased the standard size of plots to accommodate oversized caskets and vaults, while others now require the purchase of two lots when presented with an oversize vault.

Obesity can also impose additional expenses on funeral homes. In some cases, a funeral home will need to employ additional personnel and special equipment to perform a removal. Moreover, embalming obese cases also presents special problems that can require more manpower, expertise and supplies. Funeral homes also run into logistical problems when transporting and entering and exiting buildings, with oversized caskets.

Because additional manpower, special equipment and oversize product offerings all lead to increased costs for funeral homes, the question arises whether these costs may legally be passed on to families paying the funeral expenses of obese decedents. In other words, when serving the obese case, may funeral homes legally impose surcharges or higher fees for removal, embalming and an oversized casket and vault?

The question turns on the judicial interpretation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Since the ADA took effect in 1992, funeral homes have been legally obligated to provide their services to disabled individuals without discrimination. As a result, funeral homes are prohibited from imposing surcharges for embalming AIDS cases or from charging for an interpreter, if requested by a hearing-impaired attendee at a funeral service.

If obesity is regarded as a “disability” under ADA, then higher charges for serving obese cases could be unlawful. Fortunately, most courts have been reluctant to define obesity as a disability. Therefore, while this question has certainly not been resolved, currently there appears to be no legal bar under the ADA from imposing higher fees when serving obese cases. (Please note, however, that a few local jurisdictions, such as San Francisco and Santa Cruz, California, have local ordinances that prohibit discrimination based on weight.)

Some commentators have noted that the ADA is a poor vehicle with which to attack discrimination based upon weight. The ADA only protects individuals with a “disability,” which is a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more life activities. Most courts believe that obesity, by itself, is not a disability, i.e., that it does not substantially limit a major life activity. The few cases that have found obesity to qualify as a disability under ADA have typically been employment-related cases where the employee suffered from morbid obesity, not just excess weight. As of now, no ADA-related cases have successfully challenged the restriction or special charges that businesses have imposed when serving obese individuals.

Many industries, in addition to the funeral service profession, are currently tracking how the courts and Congress will deal with this issue. Airlines, movie theaters, restaurants and many other businesses might be adversely impacted if obesity is found to be a disability. Moreover, trying to define at what point obesity crosses the line from being a “condition” to a “disability” will prove problematic for courts and government agencies.

For now, funeral homes may legally charge higher fees for the special products and services they provide when handling obese cases. Of course, it is important to remain aware of the handful of state or local laws that prohibit discrimination based upon weight. In the absence of such state or local laws in your area, however, there is currently no prohibition against your firm imposing higher charges for the special products and services required when you provide funeral and disposition services to obese decedents.

Scott Gilligan
General Counsel
National Funeral Directors Association
Mike Hennings “All in the Family” Column

DISADVANTAGES OF FAMILY OWNERSHIP

It is not uncommon to find families with an unspoken understanding of dividing everything they own equally between all of their children. Everything they own could be defined as a house, condo, farm, rental buildings, stocks, bonds, personal items and equal percentages in the family business. Eight out of ten times this is exactly how their Last Will and Testament will read: upon my spouse’s death divide all equally between my living children. Most parents love their children equally and translate this equality of love into entitlement of assets.

In one family’s case, the living children numbered seven. Three worked in the business, and four were not active in the business and had made other choices for their careers, yet ownership was divided equally. While Mom and Dad were alive, this arrangement seemed to work well. All understood the arrangement was done for purposes of eliminating potential estate taxes, all children had grown up with the business and deserved to own some of it, and each child expected a regular income from the family “goldmine” as a privilege of ownership.

**Future Challenges**

The “big” issues are yet to come, such as what will happen after Mom and Dad are dead, who will actually end up with control, and what if the company can’t afford the cash for distributions to the non-active owners. What if someone wants to cash out of the corporation, or serious conflict erupts between siblings over cousins entering or leaving the business? Many families seem to confuse ownership of the business with membership in the family or assume Mom and Dad’s legacy is to spread the ownership around, and some feel that all must share in the financial rewards for years to come.

**The Disadvantages**

1. **The risks of ownership.**
   
   The general consensus of family members is that that family business will continue to make a profit thus providing cash for them plus other benefits as it has always done in the past for Mom and Dad. However, as business management changes, policies change, in-laws are involved, and seldom are there funds available for non-active owners. Other factors can also manufacture situations that create risk for the business such as:

   • Non-active shareholders become angry and demand to see the financial statements in an effort to receive their “fair” share of the income. Family unity and commitment to the business weakens.

   • Conflict increases between active and non-active siblings and other relatives.

   • The market for the business’s services and products dries up, or the competition forces the family firm out of business.

   • Poor and undisciplined management forces company into bankruptcy. All shareholders are responsible for their percentage of the debt.

2. **Where will control rest?**
   
   Even naïve parents realize the need for those closest to the action being the only people or person in absolute control. Thus, we often see attorneys summoned for the purpose of recapitalizing the business into preferred voting stock and non-voting common stock, or a voting trust put in place for the key shareholder, or simply the clear majority of the stock will rest with the active siblings. Of course, this leaves the minority shareholders with minimal power and control. Minority shareholders normally are given protection of their ownership by having a say in: sale or merger of the company, the issuance of stock to others, borrowing money in excess of a set amount, a major capital expenditure. Legally, minority shareholders can charge active owners of taking more compensation than they are worth and using corporate dollars for personal benefits, thus calling for new management or for sale of the corporation. Also minority shareholders get to vote for members of the company board each year.
3. The subtle messages of a buy/sell agreement.

We encourage families to put an agreement in place that will make it relatively easy for a shareholder to exit ownership of the business. However, some families believe multiple shareholders will be in place forever. In our experience, this is not the case in 99 percent of families. Buy/sell agreements protect the company and its stock, for example, against a shareholder getting divorced and giving an ex-spouse an ownership stake, where the stock must go in case of death, what must happen to the stock in the event of a shareholder declaring personal bankruptcy, and if the stock can be pledged as security for other business investments. Sometimes, a shareholder just wishes to have control of his or her own investments and opts out of the family business. Are they disappointing their deceased parents? Are the active siblings sending a message to the non-active that they do not trust them or their intentions?

Back to the family with seven children of which four were not active in the business. As time passed, the S corporation only distributed enough cash to the shareholders to cover their individual income taxes due on this investment and nothing else. Three of the four wanted to cash out and control the destiny of their investments and make a reasonable return. However, disadvantage number four springs from this dilemma.

4. Inability for shareholders to cash out of the family business.

Most private companies we know lack the financial ability to fund the redemption of stock from one major shareholder let alone three at one time. Funds are typically not available, and most owners will refuse to go to the bank for a loan as it might put the company in a poor financial position. Thus, the minority shareholder wanting to cash out either cannot do it or must follow certain company policy, which normally discusses the conditions and timing of a stock redemption.

We often wonder why parents insist upon bequeathing the future risk of the business and the work and commitment of the active children to the inactive ones. Why would the active child want to build the company bigger and more profitable, then see a certain percentage of the rewards go to non-active owner siblings or cousins?

While we see no specific “right way” to handle this situation, we strongly suggest talking with adult children about what they will inherit and asking for discussion about their views.

This article appeared in Mike Henning’s Family Firm Advisor newsletter, for more information about receiving one free copy of the newsletter, visit the website: www.mikehenning.com e-mail: hfbc@mikehenning.com or call 217-342-3728.
NFDA reports that the Department of Veterans Affairs now has permanent authority to provide a marker to veterans who died on or after Nov. 1, 1990 and are buried in a private cemetery, regardless of whether the grave was marked with a privately purchased marker.

To learn more about the new regulation governing veteran grave markers, visit the Federal Register Web site at http://origin.www.gpoaccess.gov/fr enter the text “graves marked with a private headstone” into the “Quick Search” box and click “Submit”; the first returned search result (“fr13my08R Graves Marked With a Private Headstone or Marker”) is the new legislation.

NFDA worked closely with VA and the House and Senate Veterans Affairs committees to pass this very important legislation.
COVINGTON—It was learning time for about 35 funeral licensees who attended a two-hour continuing education program prior to a South District membership meeting. Presenters for the CE hours were Mark Lombard, Chief Investigator, St. Tammany Parish Coroner’s Office and Dawn Scardino, Executive Director of the Louisiana State Board of Embalmers and Funeral Directors. Following the brief business meeting it was time for socializing when a group of 45 members and their guests enjoyed a meal at the Tchefuncta Country Club.
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In the eye of the storm

Just three years after the devastating storms of 2005, Louisiana was once again ground zero for one major storm and on the fringe of a second storm. In a script that was reminiscent of 2005, two major storms impacted the State of Louisiana. Hurricane Gustav made landfall somewhere in Terrebonne Parish and caused significant damage to Southeast Louisiana. Baton Rouge and Alexandria were also hard-hit by Gustav. Just when it looked like the worst was over, Hurricane Ike made landfall on the upper Texas Coast and caused major flooding along the Louisiana Coast.

These storms had an impact on our industry, as the water carried caskets away from their final resting places. Many of our members worked diligently to replace those caskets. There does not seem to be any major funeral industry issues developing as a result of the storms. There is the issue of who pays for the cost of getting the caskets back to their final resting place. Due to legislation that was passed in 2006, the casket identification issue was already addressed and should not come up again.

The storms of 2008 will have an impact on our State and the legislative process. For a few long weeks, the focus of the Governor and elected leaders was to restore order to the hard hit areas. This distraction moved attention away from a proposed special session in January of 2009 and on to the restoration and rebuilding process. Now that things have settled down a bit, the administration is hard at work bringing attention back to the legislative process and the matters of the state.

Expect to see the first Extraordinary Session (Special) to be focused on health care reform. In particular, the health care delivery system for the poor in Louisiana. You can also expect that there will be a few other issues included in that session. Since the 2009 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature is a “fiscal” session and each legislator is limited to five general bills, there may be added pressure on the Governor to expand the legislative call. We will continue to keep our ear to the ground on issues related to the funeral industry in Louisiana.

If you would like more information on specific bills passed during the legislative session, please contact David Tatman at david@tatmangroup.com.
Orlando–Louisiana Funeral Directors were well represented at the business meetings and were all seen networking on the floor of the Expo.

Attendees were not disappointed – Orlando turned out to be the place for those wishing to discover new friendships, partnerships, products, ideas and applications of those new ideas to achieve greater success in their businesses.

The transformed NFDA Convention, with more attendees, dynamic, cutting-edge workshops and engaging daily social events, provided an experience that offered more helpful information, more inspiration, more ways attendees could feel good about their profession, while also offering more fun for them and their families.

New ideas presented in innovative and interesting workshops, such as “The Cremation Trial of the Century” and “The Funeral From Hell,” helped funeral directors learn strategies for improving their businesses while better serving families.

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“I think as far as the numbers go, Hurricane Rita was worse,” explains Johnson. “But because of newer caskets with more durability, they went further distances. The caskets in this storm were more widespread because they are newer and better, so they took off. We found some that floated into Port Arthur and Bridge City, Texas — they were so scattered.” Tracking them down was a real problem according to Johnson. Today, approximately 50 bodies remain unaccounted for.

One good thing that came from Hurricane Rita was that all of the 47 cemeteries were re-mapped. Everyone has a place in each cemetery. “We know from those cemeteries that those 50 bodies are not there. We were able to go back to each one and see who was missing. We pulled those maps out and had a good grasp of what was going on,” says Johnson.

**Reaching Out**

As was the case following Hurricane Rita, funeral directors from across the state contacted Johnson to give support. Although the offers are appreciated, Johnson says it’s a painstakingly slow process. “The parish is so big, you have to travel 85 miles just to get from east to west. We spend an hour or two just getting to where we’re going every morning,” he explains. “For example, we had a vault that sunk in the middle of a pond so we had to have someone swim out there and wrap some chains around it so we could get it out. So when you ask people to come help, you just don’t know what each day will bring. It’s a very slow process,” he reiterated. “You don’t want to get people out here and then sit around and wait.”

Currently, Burton Coliseum in Lake Charles is home of a makeshift morgue in refrigerated trucks noted as the temporary resting place for 148 unidentified bodies. Johnson says that only 6 have named identities. Officials have an idea of where the others came from, and through an identification process, all will be reunited with the cemeteries from where they were swept away.

Johnson suspects that at least two or three of the remains will end up under the scrutiny of Forensic Anthropologist Dr. Mary Manheim in Baton Rouge where she will establish forensic parameters of hard to identify corpses. Manheim can give approximate weight, height and descriptive marks that are very important with family assistance.

Johnson says the financial assistance request on the table is for the estimated $100,000 needed to get the deceased back to their resting places. “The problem is that we can’t keep these remains at Burton Coliseum forever. We’ll get it done though. We just have to figure out how.”

Editor’s Note: In 2006, Zeb Johnson received the C.A. Charlet Funeral Director of the Year Award for his untiring efforts in the recovery of caskets and body identification as the results of Hurricane Rita. As an association, it is with heartfelt appreciation that his gallant efforts and valuable working hours are being re-instituted due to the results of Hurricane Ike, a 2008 devastating hurricane that struck the southwest Louisiana gulf coast areas.
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Groundbreaking Ceremonies held

Lafayette—Groundbreaking ceremonies were held Tuesday, October 7th at the 718 East Farrel Road site of the future South Lafayette location of Martin & Castille Funeral Home. According to Paul W. “Wes” Castille, President of Martin & Castille Funeral Home, the newest addition to their family will see construction beginning this fall with completion set for late summer or early fall of 2009. The home will join the Albert Street in Scott home and the St. Landry Street in Lafayette home in service to the families of Lafayette and Acadiana.

From left: Rob Guidry, Greater Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, Joey Durel, Mayor-President of Lafayette Consolidated Government, Robert Billeaud, J.B.Mouton & Sons, RT Delhomme, General Manager, Wes Castille, President and Denise F. Castille, Secretary & Treasurer of Martin & Castille Funeral Home.

ATTENTION TAILGATERS AND HUNTERS

Looking for a great recipe to share at this weekend’s tailgate party? Search no more! To Die For! Cookbook features Anita Dulany’s Corn and Field Pea Dip (pg. 6) that will score a touchdown for both sides.

Hunters, if the camp needs a fresh idea on how to cook those birds, be sure to try Mike Mulhearn’s recipe for Smothered Teal (pg. 110).

To Die For! Cookbook features must-have recipes from Louisiana Funeral Directors and their friends from all corners of the state. To get your copy, e-mail phyllisdwalters@yahoo.com or lfda@lfda.org.

Partial proceeds from the book go toward LFDA’s Gerald M. Robbins Scholarship Fund.
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Mark your calendar for these important dates

November 20, 2008
Last Chance For CE hours
Baton Rouge, LA

December 3, 2008
SWLFDA District Meeting
Opelousas, LA

February 26-27, 2009
LFDA Mid-Winter Seminar
NLFDA District Meeting
Shreveport, LA

March 30 - April 1, 2009
NFDA Advocacy Summit
Washington, DC

June 14-16, 2009
LFDA State Convention
New Orleans, LA

July 26-29, 2009
NFDA Leadership Conference
Branson, MO

October 25-28, 2009
NFDA 128th Convention
Boston, Mass.

October, 2010
NFDA 129th Convention
New Orleans, LA

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Batesville Services, Inc.

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Gene Walters – Executive Director
309 St. Landry Street
Lafayette, LA 70506

Dec 3rd - SWLFDA Meeting
   Opelousas, LA
Dec. 7th
   - Pearl Harbor Day
Dec. 25th
   - Christmas Day
Dec. 31st
   - New Years Eve

Nov. 2nd
   - Daylight Savings Time ends
Nov. 4th
   - Election Day
Nov. 11th
   - Veteran’s Day
Nov. 20th
   - LFDA’s last chance for CEUs
Nov. 27th
   - Thanksgiving Day

Jan. 1st
   - New Years Day
Jan. 19th
   - Martin Luther King’s Birthday observed