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THE NEED FOR AFFORDABLE BURIAL **By Lisa Simmons, Architarium, Customer Service** **October 11, 2008**

Families like mine are adhering to a strict budget these days. But there are always unexpected events. Unfortunately, a death in the family is one of them. Speaking from personal experience, the aftermath happens so quickly that there is no time to research costs. As a result, many Americans pay more than they may have planned. And with the current tight economy, it may be with money that was budgeted for cost of living.

On average, cremation burials are 20-25% of casket burials. The additional cost of casket burials is due to multiple factors. Casket burials:

- Involve more parts, like markers, marker bases, liners, vaults, etc.
- Involve costlier parts, like a casket
- Involve more transportation
- Require heavy equipment: ex. backhoe, lift, etc.
- Traditionally involve a funeral home, which typically charges more than a non-profit
- Traditionally involve a viewing, which has a lot of associated cost.
- Often involve a funeral package, which provides more services

Here are some specific cost comparisons:

- Container cost: The average casket today costs around \$5,000. But a casket can exceed \$10,000. In contrast, the average urn today costs around \$150. And that's the only container related cost for cremation. Caskets aren't required.
- Marker cost: A basic marker can be obtained for \$300. But, like caskets, a marker can far exceed this cost. And a marker often requires a base to stop it from sinking. That might cost around \$150.

Whatever you decide, be sure that you know the 1) options and 2) costs. Remember that planning a burial is very personal and the choices are yours.

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