

**Background Information**  
**Harris County Crosby Eastgate Cemetery**  
**21122 Crosby-Eastgate Road**  
**Crosby, Texas**

**General Information:**

Under §694.002, Texas Health and Safety Code, the commissioners court of each county shall provide for the disposition of the body of a deceased pauper. The Commissioners Court may adopt rules to implement this section.

Many of Texas' most populous Counties have opted to own and operate their own indigent cemetery rather than purchase individual gravesites (or blocks of graves) in a commercial cemetery.

**History:**

- 1894 The City of Houston established the Houston Poor Farm. The Poor Farm covered about 500 acres and was bounded by Bissonnet (was called the Poor Farm Road) on the south, Edloe on the east, Childress on the north and the MKT (now Union Pacific) railroad on the west. A small piece of the property on its southern boundary was set aside for indigent burials. This "Poor Farm Cemetery" (see attached map) was located in what is today the Sunset Terrace subdivision.
- 1923 As land in the area began to be developed, the County determined that it should purchase a new cemetery, 15 acres on Oates Rd, and redirect all new burials there.
- 1937 The County sold the Poor Farm Cemetery to a developer and transferred all burials to a common mass grave at Oates Rd.
- 2010 Oates Road Cemetery has over 15,000 burials and is reaching capacity. Only 400 – 500 grave sites remain. Harris County purchases 50 acres on Crosby Eastgate Rd. near Crosby, TX for a new indigent cemetery.
- 2011 Precinct 4 donates adjacent 42 acres to proposed cemetery, creating a 92 acre cemetery of which approximately 60 acres can be used for burials.
- 2014 Phase One of the new cemetery is complete (approximately 11 acres) and will start receiving burials on July 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Cost of Cemetery:**

- \$2.1 million (land and improvements) of which the City of Houston contributed \$800,00

- The cemetery was an eligible use of HUD CDBG funds so no general funds were utilized either from the County or City.
- 53% of all decedents have been residents of the City of Houston

**Burial Program:**

- In 2010, Harris County adopted a cremation-first policy whereby all indigents are cremated unless next of kin request a traditional burial. Cremated remains are buried in a vault containing 200 cremation containers. Every burial is provided with a stone marker showing name and dates of birth and death. Cremation vaults have a large granite slab with names and dates for all 200 cremains.
- Last year, Harris County handled almost 700 decedents of which 80% were cremations.
- Phase One will contain approximately 2,500 adult burial sites, 1,500 infant burial sites and 340 cremation vault sites. At 200 remains per vault they will hold 68,000 individual cremains.
- At 550 cremations per year, and assuming a small increase each year, the vaults will hold about 125 years of cremains. At 150 traditional burials per year and assuming a similar increase each year, the 4,000 burial sites will be adequate for about 25 years.
- About 60% of the cemetery property is suitable for burials.
- This will mean that the remaining 45 usable acres in Phases 2 & 3 will all be used for traditional burials and will accommodate approximately 20,000 burials which would be adequate for at least an additional 125 years.
- This means that we will have at a 125-year cemetery (maybe more) holding some 90,000 decedents.
- Phase two will likely be undertaken around 2040.

**Miscellaneous:**

- Annual Cost of County Bereavement Program is approximately \$1 million
- Annual Cost of Cemetery Operations (2 locations) is approximately \$125,000

