

COMMUNITY SOFTWARE CONSORTIUM

COMMUNITY SOFTWARE CONSORTIUM NEWSLETTER ~ TIER 2

January 2000

~ Community Software Consortium Newsletter ~ Volume 1 ~ Tier Two

Welcome to the first edition of the CSC Newsletter for the New Year! There are a number of exciting items to report regarding your newest software package, CSC Version 2. First and foremost, we are ready to begin general installations. If your hardware is ready, we will install Version 2.6. (We have identified a number of minor items in testing that need fixing, but it is more important to get your office started on learning and using the new system. The fixes will come later.) Version 2.6 allows for the linkage of Version 2, which focuses on the Real Property database in Oracle, with the Owner Account database still based in our familiar friend Version 1, that is not Oracle based. Testing to date on the linkage has revealed no problems.

Included in the latest release of Version 2, is a conversion program that provides DLS staff with the capability to convert consortium member's existing real property databases to an Oracle ready format. If you have made any changes to your data management library, however, we must send that library to Sigma for changes to the conversion table. We have already started sending such libraries – more below on how you can help us expedite this process.

When should you be installed? It's your call. Take into consideration the work currently going on in your office, the readiness of hardware that will run the new system, and any other factors unique to your departments operations. Feel free to call Paul Corbett or Linda Bradley to discuss timing.

The conversion efforts will occur for all Tier 2 members, in a two-stage process. As you know, we obtained a backup of your data as part of the Y2K contingency planning process, regardless of Tier membership. All existing databases, Inventory, Sales, Owner Account, and any other specialty databases, for both Assessors as well as Collectors were backed up, placed on floppies and currently are in our office. These databases will be utilized as the first step of the two step conversion process, unless you request a more current database be used. The first-step conversion is to allow you to work with the system and identify conversion and cleanup issues. The second-step conversion is done when you are ready to leave the old system behind and do all your work on the new system.



LET THE CONVERSIONS BEGIN

In order for a member's database to be converted, two files are essential. The first file is the actual inventory database. The second is the Data Management Library for the Real Property (Inventory) database. **Here's where we need your assistance.**

All Tier Two CSC members who desire to take part in the first phase of the multiphase conversion process are being asked to submit a copy of the community's Real Property Data Management Library. Note that once the DMT library has been sent for conversion YOU ARE REQUESTED TO PLEASE MAKE NO UPDATES TO THE LIBRARY. This entails no longer having the ability to change field characteristics or create user-defined fields until the conversion is completed.

Instructions for the creation of the necessary file accompany this newsletter. If you have any questions please contact Linda Bradley, Paul Corbett, or John DiOrio at 800-521-5536. The diskette containing the file should be mailed to the address noted on the instructions. Please ensure we know which community you are with a cover letter or by naming the file as suggested in the instructions.



BUDGET CONUNDRUM \$\$\$\$\$\$?

Many of you are in the process of establishing your budgets and have been wondering what software costs to include in your budget projections. To assist you the following guide has been developed. The pricing is reflective of costs outlined in an October 13, 1999 memorandum to CSC Tier 2 members. Note that there has been NO change in the pricing and this section of the newsletter only serves to reiterate the information. It is hoped that it will answer questions you may be dealing with at this point in time.

What should I budget for the purchase of my Oracle Licenses?

Tier Two members of good standing will have purchased for them, through the Consortium, a maximum of five licenses per municipality. The cost for this procurement has been borne by the Consortium through community dues. Total cost to your community for five or fewer licenses is zero dollars. How many licenses do you need? Again, how many regular, concurrent users do you have? If you have a full-time clerk, and assistant assessor who regularly uses the system, and three part-time board members who each occasionally use the system, you need three licenses. If one of those board members uses the system day in and day out, you might need four. It's a common-sense judgement call.

Are there any additional costs associated with these five licenses?

Yes. Each community will be responsible for procuring a Silver Level Support Maintenance Agreement with Oracle Corporation for **each** license obtained by the community. If three licenses are established for your community, then three maintenance agreements will need to be purchased by the community. These Maintenance Agreements are executed on a yearly basis and the Consortium will oversee these purchases for member communities. The CSC will pay the cost of the maintenance agreements for the first year, and only the first year. In subsequent years the communities will be responsible for all associated fees for maintenance. Total cost to each member community for Oracle Silver Level Support is projected to be approximately \$140 per license.

What if my community will need additional Oracle licenses?

Should a CSC member require any number of licenses above the five licenses available for distribution to each member, the purchase of additional licenses can be arranged through the Consortium at a predetermined price. Additional licenses will also require the procurement of Silver Level Support services at approximately \$140 per user. For pricing of additional licenses, contact Linda Bradley at 800-521-5536 ext. 62394.

The Assessor's office utilizes the public access option provided by the software, does this require a separate Oracle license?

Yes. Public access will require the procurement of at least one license. Note that this license can be one of the five to be distributed to communities by the Consortium, so it may not entail additional costs to the community to maintain this function.

Are there any other costs that should be included in the budget?

Yes. In planning for a total system package, additional consideration must be given to two additional software packages. The first software package that must be purchased to establish a complete system is modem software. Carbon Copy for Windows (95/98) is the required communications package. The approximate price is \$120 for a new user, or \$60 dollars for an upgrade of existing installations of Carbon Copy. Note that each installation will be required to have a functional modem and telephone line for remote support. The second software package necessary for a fully functional CAMA system is IQ/Objects. Note that the existing version of IQ coupled with Version 1 is NOT compatible with Version 2. As part of each installation, a single user license of IQ/Objects will be included in the installation. The community will be responsible for the purchase of additional licenses. The cost of these licenses is \$625 per user. In summary, there are three additional costs, the communication software package, the modem and telephone line for support issues, and IQ/Objects. As a matter of policy, the new version will not be installed unless the modem line and Carbon Copy are installed and working. Support will be challenging enough in the new Oracle/Windows environment. DOR and Sigma need to be able to diagnose and, when possible, correct problems without travelling to your office.



Correct Date? – Y2k Today

All UNIX users should verify the current system date. The easiest way to do this is to review the top of a system generated report such as a Detailed Parcel Listing. The current system date, unless changed, may read 1970. Another method to verify the system date is to enter the system as root, at the # sign type the word date, and then press enter. The system will place the current date on the screen. If the date reflected is not correct call your support staff at 1-800-521-5536 for assistance in rectifying the date.

Both UNIX and Win95 users have had their databases revised to reflect a Y2k compliant 8 character date (month-month-day-day-year-year-year-year). Real Property and Owner Account databases have been made compliant and all data previously entered has been converted. An IQ program should be run to verify the conversion. Note that dates prior to 1950 may need to be further converted. These dates may appear as 2049 for the year 1940. If the dates do appear to have occurred in the future rather than the past please call your support staff for assistance. These dates can be corrected through the execution of a simple program. The other option is to manually adjust these dates.

If your community has established satellite databases such as the Abatement Exemption Database, or a Tax Title Database, contact either Linda Bradley or Paul Corbett for assistance in converting the date fields within these databases.

Any additional issues or abnormalities with date fields should be reported to the DLS support staff.



Got E-Mail?

Please inform us if you have an E-mail address you would like us to utilize for future CSC mailings. We will gladly forward the information to you via e-mail as well as forward your office a hard copy of the mailing!



A Picture is worth

The photographs that the system can put on screen and onto property record cards will be stored in the directory specified in a file called sigma.ini. The default directory is C:\sigma\images. So what should you name your photo files? Well, you have some choices. With the 20 character directory\file name available under Win95 and Win98 and our Oracle table, you could name the photo of a house in map 1 lot 1: 0010-0000-00010.jpg (19 total characters). This is fine if you have no more than 1000 houses to photograph. If you have more, DOS does not like more than 1,000 files in a directory. There is a simple solution. Create directories for each map. Map 1 becomes directory \0010, and the full path name to map 1 lot 1 becomes C:\sigma\image\0010\0000-00010.jpg with the file name truncated down to just block and lot. Have more than 1000 photos in a map? Again, make subdirectories, staying within the 20 total character limit for directory\file names (beyond the directory path specified in sigma.ini, e.g. c:\sigma\images is not included in the character count.)

Note: If you adopt a naming convention of more than 8 characters, you cannot display the full file name at the DOS prompt. You can in Windows Explorer, but pure MS-DOS will truncate the name.

Note also: We are negotiating with Sigma on a product called Photo Maintenance Module that we have not yet actually seen. If it is worth getting and we can get it, it uses a completely different naming convention and handles more than one photo per parcel. Stay tuned, but you can still move ahead with using photos under the current arrangement.



Changing of the Guard

The Community Software Consortium has a new Coordinator at the Division of Local Services! Linda Bradley will be taking over for Regina McArdle. Regina, a familiar name and face to all in the Consortium, spearheaded the formation of the Consortium and played a key role in the start up phase of the CSC. Her efforts will be greatly missed but she is wished well as she applies her expertise in other areas at the Division. You can contact Linda at 1-800-521-5536, extension 62394.