

# The McCormick Letter

The Nation's Leader in Estimating Software

May 2001

## CAD Estimating:

## Meet Indiana's Steve Shrader, The Electronic Electrical Contractor



Steve Shrader is a unique kind of electrical contractor. With a crew of about 60 electricians and foremen, his company, Shrader Industrial Systems Inc., of Muncie and Ft. Wayne, Ind., has no project managers, in the traditional sense!

“Our overhead can run as low as 5 percent,” Shrader claims. “We’re ahead of the game, thanks to technology.” In his design/build electrical contracting work, Shrader has moved from paper to electronics. An integral part of his work are McCormick’s CAD Estimating system and AutoCAD.

### One Effort, Three Products

Essentially, when Shrader is doing the computer work on a job, he does it once, but he gets three products:

1. A set of drawings for his design-build client and other key people involved in the job, including the electrical engineer who must put a stamp on the drawings;
2. A set of working plans for his jobsite foremen to follow; and
3. An estimate, thanks to the CAD Estimating interface between AutoCAD and McCormick.

“AutoCAD works by creating blocks and layers; a block can represent anything that you would count on a drawing, including outlets, fixtures, and panels,” Shrader says. “I then lay out all of the conduit and wire using different layers. Each layer represents a different type of conduit. Then CAD Estimating tells me how much material I need and the lengths and types of wires I’ve put in there.

“Using standard drawings, it’s almost impossible to calculate the exact amount of material required for a job. But when I get done with the drawings, we have all of the details, so we get an exact bill of material for the work. I would guess that, when we’re done with the drawing, we can order from the bill of material and have 99 percent of what we need on that job,” Shrader says.

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## You Asked, We Acted— Presenting a Parts Maintenance Utility

McCormick Systems tries to be responsive. And we’re happy to report that a request from our late-March User’s Conference was shipped out in one month—it’s now ready for your use!

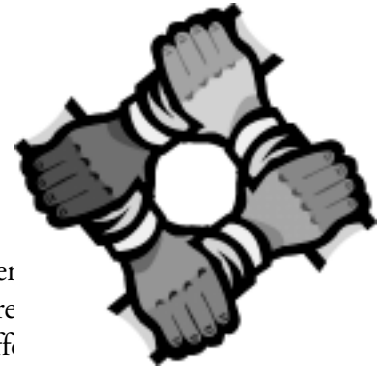
Customers asked for a Parts Maintenance Utility. It allows you to bring items from one McCormick parts database—such as from the VDV database—to another. This ability was not previously available.

You asked for it, and McCormick responded. We hope this proves something important: We DO listen when you talk with us! ✕

## Highlights

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# Networking—The McCormick Way: You Can Do Real-Time Multitasking



Many customers ask us about Networking. That's why we ran an article in the April 2001 newsletter on "networking basics." This follow-up deals with what McCormick Systems offers you NOW if you're ready to consider network estimating.

## The Scenario

Let's say you have a "rush," urgent project of some size. You need to get the estimate done quickly. Perhaps you can assign more than one estimator to work on the job and get the estimate done in pieces. At the same time, you need an estimate that is updated in "real-time."

It's not just "possible" to cope with this scenario using McCormick's 8000 system, it's actually easy. You can, literally, have five estimators—or 10—estimating the same project, at the same time. Not only that, each one of the project's participants can see what the other is doing.

## The Possibilities

Let's move away from estimating for a second. Think about the standard word processing application that almost all Windows' users find on their computers—Microsoft Word. In a network setting, that software is kept on a server. Let's say you're writing a proposal, and you have five components to it, each is being assembled by a different person.

Wouldn't it be advantageous, time-wise, to have the five proposal writers work on that document at the same time? Working simultaneously, they could pick up each other's mistakes and make sure everything was on track.

Although that's NOT possible with MS Word, it IS possible with McCormick's estimating software. Let's say you are estimating a five-story building. You can have Estimator A handle Floor 1, B handle Floor 2, and so on—simultaneously—and have the Estimators check each others' work. The result is that estimate will be finished faster...and you won't have to shuffle a disk around the office.

What we offer here is real-time multitasking for your estimating staff!

## The Network

Note that a network access offers other advantages. Your estimators will all be able to work from the same

database. Thus, when you update the database (or when we do), you won't have to re-enter the same information at different workstations.

Plus, when one estimator creates a new assembly of some sort, that assembly is on the network for everyone to use—forever—and it doesn't have to be transferred via disk...or recreated, on down the line, by someone else. The efficiency you gain this way can roll up into significant estimating productivity gains over time. But there's even more to the McCormick networking story.

## Next Step: WIN 12000

Coming soon from McCormick Systems is the WIN 12000 system. It offers exactly what's detailed above in the WIN 8000—plus something extra.

With the 8000, you purchase a certain number of licenses to use our system. Let's say you've obtained 10 licenses. The software resides on your network server, and the 10 licenses are keyed to 10 specific computers or workstations, although you have 20 estimators who could benefit from using the software.

As we all know, estimators and project managers aren't always in the office, and, even if present, aren't always fully engaged in using their estimating software. Purchasing a license for 20 users when, at any given time, half of them are likely to be doing something else, is wasteful. That's what you've told us, and that's why the 12000 was created.

With the WIN 12000, you would purchase the same 10 licenses, but you could load the software on, say, 20 workstations. At any given time, 10 of those 20 workstations could use the system; the server would keep track of how many licenses were in use. This "floating" license set-up maximizes your return on your McCormick software investment.

Additionally, the new 12000 will integrate with the old-style licenses. More information will be available soon, as the WIN 12000 will make its debut this summer. ✕

*Part One of this two-part series—Networking Basics—appeared in the April 2001 issues of this newsletter.*

# User's Conference 2001: A Smash Hit!

More than 150 contractors, estimators, and other user company personnel attended the McCormick Systems Users Conference held in Arizona in late March.

A new feature this year was an "open forum," in which McCormick staffers offered to answer any and all questions. We devoted 2-1/2 hours to this, and many attendees said we could have spent two days on it!

While company personnel were responsible for answering the questions, in a number of cases, questions were answered by other contractors in the audience. It was a true give-and-take, a prime information-sharing opportunity.

Steve Kadlec (Kadlec Electric, Elgin, Ill.) won an additional Windows 6000 kit (\$2,500 value) as the winner of the Earlybird drawing. Entrants became eligible by signing up and submitting registration fees for Users Conference 2001 prior to Feb. 5. A similar opportunity will be available for the 2002 conference—watch these pages for details!

"This was an excellent learning opportunity for all of us," said President Todd McCormick. "There are things our system does that many of the people in attendance didn't know about—and we got a chance to fill them in. Plus, while we have an idea of where we want to go with our software, this is a great chance for McCormick's people to listen and learn."

*Continued from page 1.*

## **A Convincing Argument**

One key to making electronic contracting work, Shrader says, is convincing everyone at the job site of its value. "I make the point that if they have all of the information and drawings and material right there at the job site they can more easily get their work done.

"You can't hand a foreman a set of drawings that are not complete and expect him to put a job in. Over time, our guys in the field have come to love this electronic approach. It has given them a certain level of confidence that, when they go to do their job, they will have what they need."

Shrader says that, at first, the foremen on his jobs weren't used to this new approach. "They would call me and ask me questions, and I'd tell them, 'The answer is on the drawing.' I had designed the job and created the working drawings, so I knew the answer was there.

"After a while, the phone calls started to drop. The guys knew the answer was on the drawings. Now, when they call, it's only in the case of a real problem."

## **A salute to the Desert Dogs—**

to be a member of this unique "club," you must have attended the Users Conference more than four times. Here's a list of VIP Desert Dogs—those who have attended our conference eight or more years. The number of years of attendance follows each Desert Dogs' name (in parentheses):



Jerry Younger (16)  
Erle Howard (16)  
Fred Bauer, Jr. (15)  
Jack Beatson (13)  
David Miles (13)  
David DeFelice (12)  
Joe Dolan (12)  
Bill Andrews (11)  
Tom Lanum (10)  
Brent Loney (10)  
Greg Bolte (8)  
Joe Klein (8)  
Lloyd (Bud) Allen, Sr. (8)  
Henry (Bubba) Bajer (8)

## **CAD Estimating Is Integral**

McCormick's CAD Estimating software is integral to Shrader's approach. It's vital that the estimate be created at the same time he creates the design-build drawings for clients and working drawings for his field people.

"I do the prep work and the working drawings, and once I get the drawing done, the estimate is done," he says. "It has increased our gross profit on jobs by 15 percent or more.

"Basically, the architects just e-mail us their drawings. The only problem we run into is that the architects don't submit drawings the way they need to be drawn to allow CAD estimating to work. To make the work go even faster, I've been building a symbol library for the two main architectural firms we work with.

"And, sure, there are always little things you have to go back and tweak a bit. But, basically, the CAD Estimating system helps me get all of this work done at once, and it gives my people the bill of material they will work from. There's no substitute it." ✕

# Training Classes: Your Chance to Advance

## **Standard Estimating Class**

It is structured to take you from "Job Startup" clear through "Bid Summary." In-depth instruction helps students with good manual experience get up on line. Those that are already using McCormick products get "valuable brush-up" exposure to help them get more out of the system.

## **Advanced Management Class**

This class is designed for the database manager or chief estimator. Students attending this three-day class

will drill down into the bottom of the program and learn how to build specification formulas, reports and reports formulas, keyboard mapping, setting up security, and more. To attend this powerful class, you must be proficient in all takeoff phases of the McCormick product and have an understanding regarding what your company requires at this level.

## **Upcoming Schedule**

All classes below will be held at McCormick's training center in Mesa,

Ariz. Classes start at 8 a.m. and wind up about 5 p.m. daily.

Class sizes are limited! Contact Jody Dougherty or Loriel Allen—800-444-4890—for further details or to register.

*May 16 - 18*

**Standard Estimating Class**

*June 6 - 8*

**Standard Estimating Class**

*June 13 - 15*

**Standard Estimating Class**

*July 11 - 13*

**Standard Estimating Class**

*July 18 - 20*

**Advanced Management Class**

*July 25 - 27*

**Standard Estimating Class**

*Aug. 8 - 10*

**Standard Estimating Class**

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## **McCormick Is Where You Are... at Industry Trade Shows**

### **NECA's VDV Expo 2001**

Las Vegas, Nevada

May 20-21

### **Electric 2001**

Orlando, Florida

June 25-27

### **IEC Expo**

Las Vegas, Nevada

October 1-4

### **NECA Show 2001**

Washington, D.C.

October 21-23