

Why You Might Visit Arizona in April

Of course, I live here—so I can list a few hundred reasons to visit Arizona. But I'm not from the Convention & Visitor's Bureau, and I'm not advocating a visit here any old time.

Consider coming to this year's McCormick User's Conference, April 19-24. I'm writing personally to invite you, not only because it will help you, but also because it will—now and later—help our company to help you!

Sure, I know that sounds like a sales pitch. I guess it is. But McCormick Systems doesn't arrange this conference with profit from the event in mind. Bear with me for a brief explanation.

Gains for All of Us

Four things "happen" every year at the User's Conference. I wish I knew how to distill and bottle them or clone them. I don't. Here are the keys:

1. Contractors and estimators gather in one place and talk electrical estimating. You learn from your peers. Old friends who met at our conference attend each year from different parts of the country. They don't compete! They sit down and share ideas. That has tremendous value.
2. I've heard over time that companies like ours fear their customers, and so schedule such events with wall-to-wall presentations—never allowing customers to unload. *That's not our purpose.* We listen to you—in scheduled feedback sessions and in one-on-one conversations. In



our 25 years of experience, there's no better way to make our product better!

3. A few years ago, we discovered that many McCormick users did not know about all of the components we've packed into the system. In other words, some did not know what they already had on their desks—paid for, ready to use! So we added a session on "what you have that you don't know you have" several years ago.

Last year, it ran four hours; I had the feeling we could have gone another four without boring a soul!

4. When we call weeks later to ascertain the event's value, every contractor or estimator who attends points out something different about the Conference.

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Tips & Hints: 15 Ways to Get More Out of Your McCormick System

The following tips will save you time and money when estimating using McCormick Systems software.

Handy-Dandies

1. The EDIT EXTENSION feature will let you UPDATE Price and Labor per saved extension to reflect any price or database changes made since the original extension was saved. These updates will NOT affect any manual changes you might have made.
2. The PULL DOWN—TOOLS options TIME CALCULATOR and WINDOWS CALCULATOR are tools to help the User do calculations when doing Takeoff or managing the database (most specifications will only recognize decimal numbers, such as Labor Hours).
3. The AUDIT TRAIL ADVANCED in (3) Takeoff lets the User FILTER what information is displayed, including All Takeoff (including Notes), Item + Assm Only, Item Only, and Assm Only. These apply to the ENTIRE JOB. Other filters available include All Current Labels, Item Current Labels and Assm Current Labels. These display information only for the current LABEL SET showing in the LABEL BAR.
The system remembers the filter from the last time you opened the Advanced Audit Trail.
4. The EDIT EXTENSION feature has multiple "spreadsheets" that breakdown the original takeoff into different formats, all with their own individual "reports." They include the basic breakdown by ITEM NUMBER, COST CODE TOTALS (if included in the original report structure), breakdown by COST CODE and RAW EXTENSION where the majority of editing usually takes place.

Recommendations

5. We recommended there be at least two (2) columns of labels in the (2) Labels Extension Labels screen for every job. One column should always be called BID PACKAGE and contain at least one label called BASE BID.

6. Choosing the BACKUP button in the Jobs screen allows you to backup individual jobs. You can choose any destination for the job using the dialog box, including other drives/media. This is the method recommended for moving jobs between separate systems.



Neat Options

7. The SCHEDULE feature allows you to PRINT a number of different ways using the PRINT button along the bottom of the window. These include the ENTIRE Schedule, a specific TASK, or a specific DATE RANGE. The printout will print the "background" info first, then start printing the grid.
8. The EDIT EXTENSION feature will allow you to CHOOSE any combination of UPDATE or OVERWRITE in the ReExtend Options window; i.e. Update Price, OVERWRITE Quantities and leave both Labor unchecked.
9. Win6000/8000/12000 Users can create NEW, EDIT existing, COPY existing, and DELETE any EXTENSION REPORT in (4) Extension as needed. These can also be copied back to template jobs using PASTE FROM JOB.

Shortcuts

10. The SCHEDULE feature will return you to TODAY'S date in the grid by using the TODAY button along the bottom of the window. This can be especially handy in long-term jobs that you may be reviewing.
11. The PULL DOWN—TOOLS option SCHEDULE is based on Microsoft Project and lets you create a Schedule based on the data collected when an Extension is done. This can be done using either the Cost Codes or Schedule Codes specification for sorting. The schedule can be exported to Microsoft Project.

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User's Conference Schedule

- ◆ April 19-20—Pre-conference Training classes (Note: Both standard and advanced classes are scheduled!)
- ◆ April 21—Golf Tournament, followed by our evening Opening Reception
- ◆ April 22-23—Conference Days (our on-site computer lab available all day)
- ◆ April 24—Lab open in morning for additional user questions and instruction

To register, call 800-444-4890 and ask for Jody Dougherty or Loriel McCormick.

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Perhaps, if everyone had precisely the same hot button, we could do this as a one-hour Webcast. But that's not the way business works! You might well come and take home something from a single session that is more valuable than all of the others; or you might learn something from another contractor or estimator at dinner that's worth tens of thousands of dollars when you get home.

Give Yourself a Chance!

As noted, I can't bottle the conference. We can't do 15 or 20 of them a year. And, with everyone seeming to find value in another session or meeting or one-on-one encounter with peers or McCormick staff, I literally can't give you a single specific that will get you to come.

I can tell you this: Come with an open mind, ask questions, and listen to what other contractors and estimators are saying. If you'll do that, you will learn something that may well produce a three-month or six-month "return on investment" on your travel dollars and your time.

We've actually had companies send two or three people to this conference. When they got home and compared notes, each had something different—something of value—they learned during the event!

Please come to the McCormick User's Conference in 2004, or send one or several of your people. You'll be glad you did—first, when you (or they) get home; and second, on down the line, as we improve the product based on your input. ✖

—Todd McCormick

ShowStopper '03 Award Winner!

McCormick Systems took home its eighth "ShowStopper" Award from the 2003 NECA's show. The roll-out of our Remote Take-Off product—modified to work on the Pocket PC—was one of the top products in the show, according to *Electrical Contractor* magazine.



That takes our total to eight awards in 24 years. The magazine's "ShowStopper awards" previously went by the name "Contractor's Choice." McCormick has now won the honor in three consecutive years and five out of six—1998 for change order program, 1999 for our CAD Estimating product, 2001 for our T-Bill system on a handheld, and 2002 for the introduction of RTO for handhelds using the Palm operating system. ✖

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12. Any LABOR assigned in BID SUMMARY (5) BidSum can be edited directly in the window, i.e., the RATE, BURDEN, and/or BURDEN % can all be edited (or created from "scratch") without any adverse effect on the original GROUP.
13. You can SEARCH any column in the Jobs screen by using the blank boxes at the bottom of each column. Type what you are looking for and it will "actively" look for matches as you type.

Reminders

14. The SCHEDULE feature will allow overlap of TASKS on the same workday if the PREDECESOR has been removed.
15. Choosing the DELETE button in the Jobs screen will delete whatever job is highlighted in the list. You are prompted first to choose YES or NO, and if you choose YES, the job is deleted. ✖

Estimator's Corner

Item Specs Edit Extension



Note: This column adds to material found in our November 2003 newsletter. If you've misplaced your print or electronic copy, download it by going to www.mccormicksys.com—hit the Newsletters tab on the left-hand-side menu.

The following could be allowed for Admin and Estimator Groups:

Edit Bid_Lbr
Edit Book_Price
Edit P_Adj_1
Edit P_Adj_2
Edit P_Adj_3
Edit Extended Quantity

NOTE: Allowing a user to modify formulas or change units in the edit extension report should be done with care. Once overwritten, the formula in that report can't be recovered. Re-extending will recover the formula, but the work done in edit extension on that extension screen will be lost.

A mistake in changing a unit—*per each* to *per 100*, for example—could cause a large mistake in the estimate.

Modifying Extension Reports

If not already included, users may want to modify their extension formulas or create new Extension Reports for Edit Extension as follows:

"Edit" Price 1 & Bid Labor by Cost Code
Add "Book Price" and "P/Adj 1" after "Quantity".

"Edit" Price 2 & NECA 2
Add "Book Price" and "P/Adj 2" after "Quantity"

"Edit" Price 3 & NECA 3
Add "Book Price" and "P/Adj 3" after "Quantity"

"Edit" Price 2 & Bid Labor by Cost Code
Add "Book Price" and "P/Adj 2" after "Quantity".

By adding these fields, the "Book Price" column and "P/Adj 1", "P/Adj 2", or "P/Adj 3" columns would be added. This allows the user to see the "Book Price" and adjust "Price 1", "Price 2", or "Price 3" by adjusting the multipliers "P/Adj 1", "P/Adj 2", or "P/Adj 3" accordingly. ✖

Next time: *Modifying Prices & Labor.*

Get Windows Training Now!

Standard Estimating

The class is structured to take you from "Job Startup" through "Bid Summary". It provides in-depth instruction, including good manual experience and "brush-up" exposure for those who want to get more out of the product.

Advanced Management

Designed for the database manager or chief estimator, this class drills down into the bottom of the program. You will learn how to build specification formulas, write reports and reports formulas, and more. Before taking the class, you should be proficient in all takeoff phases of the product and understand your company's needs.

Upcoming Schedule

Unless specified, all classes are at the training center in our office in Chandler, AZ. Classes start at 7 a.m. and wind up about 4 p.m. daily. We make hotel reservations using information from the registration forms sent in from participants. We must receive your registration form in order to reserve a space in our class. To obtain a registration form, call 800-444-4890. ✖

Chandler, AZ

Standard Estimating
February 18-20 & 25-27
March 17-19
March 31-April 2
April 19-20 (pre-Conference)
April 28-30
May 12-14
May 19-21

Advanced Management
April 19-20 (pre-Conference)

For information about classes in Maryland, call 800-444-4890.