

## E-J, Oldest U.S. Electrical Contractor, Makes Good Use of Windows System

EJ Electric Installation (Long Island City, N.Y.) is one of the top 50 electrical contractors in the United States. Founded in 1899, it is believed to be the oldest independent electrical contractor in the country.

Why does this historic, big company use the Win 8000 system from McCormick to do its estimates?

"When I got here, about six years ago, we were still using the DOS system from McCormick," says Mark Jackson, chief estimator. "We switched to Windows about 18 months ago."

Jackson took the chief estimator spot last January, rising to the position on the retirement of Norman Coles. Coles, who spent 44 years on the job, was one of McCormick Systems' "Desert Dogs!"

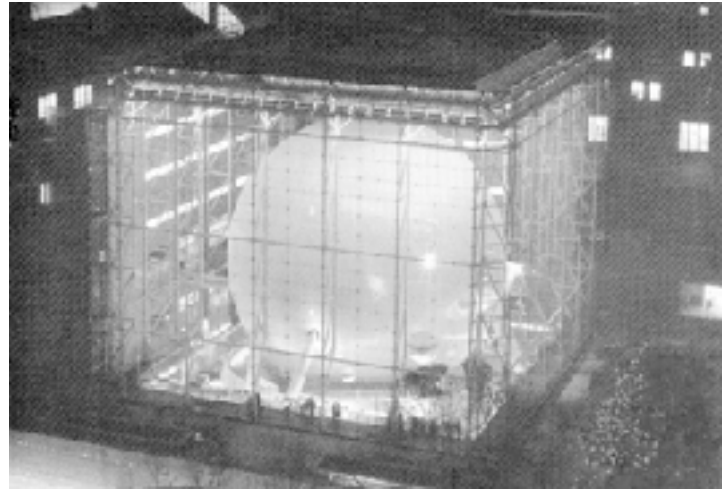
### Flexibility & Expandability

To answer the "why" question, Jackson refers to a recent job, in which New York City's Hayden Planetarium was torn down—with a sparkling new Rose Theater for Earth and Science put in its place.

"Basically, they built a globe containing two theaters, and surrounded it with a glass box," says Jackson. "From the outside, it's wonderful. We were in there from the time they tore it down. We put in the heavy feeders and did the entire new structure. And let me tell you, there isn't a straight piece of conduit in the whole job!

"Most of our jobs are like this. They aren't production jobs, like an apartment house. In this job, for instance, there were perhaps 200 items that are just not going to be in your regular database. Our estimators (seven full-time Win 8000 users) have to go in and physically customize these items for these jobs."

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*E-J installed the entire new structure for the Rose Theater for Earth and Science in New York City.*

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## Highlights

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## McCormick Systems

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E-J's estimators, then, are creating job-specific items and assemblies on the fly in the McCormick system. "This is very easy for us to do with the McCormick system," Jackson says.

Another facet here is speed. "There's always going to come a time in doing an estimate where the estimator comes to something he's not sure of," says Jackson. "We tell them to just name it. They just put a name on it—let's say it's a three-legged widget—and move on.

"In this way, the estimator can just progress and move forward. Later, between the group of us in the estimating department, we'll take a look at the problem, and come up with a solution."

### Splitting up a job

With the Win 8000 unit networked, Jackson, as chief estimator, says a major McCormick advantage is the ability for several estimators to work on the same job at the same time.

"We often do a substantial project. Our piece of putting in the new terminal at Kennedy Airport for American Airlines is about \$25 million.

"For a job of that magnitude, we split up the estimate. We had one estimator who just did the lighting. We had another who just did the feeders, another for switchgear, and another for pipe and wire.

"Now, the best part is that each of these estimators can do his own thing. Each fellow has his own area. Then, we can push a button at the end, and it all comes together."

Jackson notes that the conversion from DOS to Windows has made some things a lot easier. Two examples:

◆ On the American Airlines job, which transcends four years in time, there are more than 20 labor categories

to handle in the estimate. "This definitely would not have been easy were we still working with the DOS version," Jackson says.

◆ Cutting and pasting is something that is a reasonable process in Windows. "Let's say you're done with an estimate and you realize you've left out five fixtures. In Windows, can just stick them in there. The old DOS system definitely did not like to have things inserted."

### Chief Estimator's Favorites

Jackson notes that there's another reason for E-J to keep using McCormick: It helps him get his job—reviewing estimates—done quickly. "Basically, I'm a second set of eyes. What I like about it is that I can look at assemblies by material and labor at the same time.

"I have a review screen that I've customized," Jackson explains. "I do this by adding tags to key elements of a job. I'm able to bring up on the screen all that I need to see. I can get through an estimate with a couple hundred assemblies quickly—and I can know that I've done the job."

When Jackson is done, he calls Tony Mann, the company president, over. Mann is a "hands-on owner," Jackson says. "He needs to have a complete feel of what the job is." Essentially, Mann takes a look at the bid summary screen with Jackson, and they finalize the bid.

How did Jackson become a fan of McCormick's abilities? "I started in estimated more than 17 years ago. For the first 11 years, I worked for a small contractor. We did everything by hand.

"When I got here, it was my first experience with computerized estimating. It didn't take long until I was sold on McCormick by the people I worked with—the other estimators here at E-J." ✕



**Jacques Mann (top) entered the company in 1912, Bob Mann (center) joined the company in 1953, and Tony Mann joined in 1986.**



**Did You Know...** Repair and compact your McCormick database on a regular basis. It is the equivalent of a full system defrag for your McCormick software. (Do not ignore the warnings! The most crucial time to run a repair and compact is after any unusual system event.)

## Your Last Chance for User's Conference!

You could spend a week in Arizona, have fun, learn more about your software (from McCormick Systems personnel), and learn more about your business (from fellow contractors from around the country). We're talking about the McCormick Systems User's Conference, set to begin April 10 with a morning golf tournament and evening opening reception.

Events actually begin—for some—on Monday April 8, when a two-day optional training class begins. Our conference continues through to Saturday, with full-day meetings on Thursday and Friday, and half-day User's Labs each of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

If you're just now thinking you might profit by coming—and you will!—call Jody Dougherty or Lorie McCormick at 800-444-4890 to obtain all of the vital information. ✕

## Send Us Your E-mail Address!

We'd like to begin communicating with you, our customer, via e-mail. To get the ball rolling, we need your e-mail address.



Please send an e-mail from your regular e-mail address to [lmccormick@mccormicksys.com](mailto:lmccormick@mccormicksys.com). If possible, please put the subject line as "My E-Mail Address." In the body (text) of the e-mail, please give us your name, company name, and city/state. *Thanks!* ✕



**Did You Know...** When moving a temporary assembly into the permanent database, our software automatically creates a permanent item out of any temporary items contained within that assembly—to ensure that your assembly stays consistent from job to job.

## What We're Telling The Media

### VDV Database—Upgraded!



McCormick Systems has revised and expanded its Voice-Data-Video database, to encompass more than 15,000 items. *This takes in a lot of ground. Note that the McCormick electrical DB has roughly 35,000 items. And a national electrical distributor, Rexel, recently announced it was expanding its VDV marketing program nationwide—putting 100 items in each of its more than 300 branches!*

Included in the upgraded VDV database are:

- ✓ More than 18,000 manufacturer-specific items (from Tyco/AMP, Belden, Erico, Carlon, Krone, Panduit, NordX, and many more);
- ✓ Hundreds of items from the NECA Manual of Labor Units; and
- ✓ More than 1,400 "generic" items.

McCormick users can use the entire VDV database, or import items as needed. For more information, see [www.mccormicksys.com](http://www.mccormicksys.com). ✕

*Privately owned McCormick Systems (www.mccormicksys.com), of Mesa, Ariz., provides high-productivity software for contractors to use in producing consistent, profitable estimates for electrical and voice-data-video work.*

## Estimator's Corner

# A Look at the Specs— Divisions 1 to 15



Read the specifications very thoroughly and add the following information to your Estimate.

- ✓ If costs are to be included in the estimate, but are not known yet, **MARK THE REMINDER BOX FOR THAT COST.**
- ✓ Date and time the proposal is due.
- ✓ *Are a Bid Bond and/or a Proposal Bond required?* If so start the process and be sure that bonding costs are properly setup in your Bid Summary, and check the bonding box on the Top Sheet.
- ✓ *Was there a non-refundable plan charge?* If so add that cost to your Bid Summary under Direct Job Expense.
- ✓ *Are as-built drawings required?* If so add their cost to your Bid Summary under Direct Job Expense. Note: As-built drawings may be more expensive than seems on the surface. Keep careful records of your company's costs for as-builts based on a project's size and type.
- ✓ Note all of the additive and deductive alternates for this project. Include the alternates as labels in column 1 below Base Bid. Be sure to note clearly whether the alternate is an additive or deductive alternate. Do not forget to include all deductive Alternates as a part of your Base Bid. A typical list of the Base Bid and Alternates would be as follows:
  - ◆ Base Bid
  - ◆ Alt. E-1 Add
  - ◆ Alt. E-2 Add
  - ◆ Alt. E-3 Deduct
  - ◆ Alt. E-4 Add
- ✓ Check the General Conditions for any requirements that may affect your portion of the work. Look for requirements that could affect the completion time; job conditions; cleanup; relationships with the owner, engineer, other contractors; approval drawing approvals; additional insurance; hold harmless clauses; and any areas where responsibility is shifted from the owner, architect, engineer, or general contractor to you. Note: You may need additional insurance for the project. If you do, obtain the cost from your insurance carrier and add those cost to your Bid Summary under Direct Job Expense. ✕

*Next month: More about "The Specifications, Division 1-15."*

## 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. ✕

*April 8-9 (Tempe, AZ)*

#### **Pre-User's Conference**

Standard Estimating and  
Advanced Management

*April 24-26*

Standard Estimating

*May 1-3*

Standard Estimating

*May 15-17*

Advanced Management

*June 5-7*

Standard Estimating

*June 26-28*

Standard Estimating