

## Bubba Says: "Don't Wait to Convert from DOS to Windows"

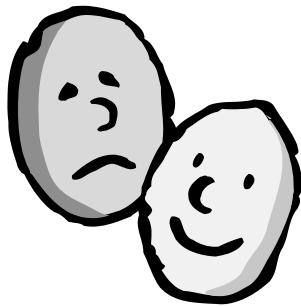
If you call Avis Electric in Mechanicsville, VA (near the state capital of Richmond) and ask for company founder Henry Bajer, you'll likely be told he's not there. Only salesmen call for somebody named Henry. Family, friends, customers, and employees of the 18-year-old company call the man Bubba.

Bubba has a lot of experience with electrical estimating software programs. He started using a computer for estimating in 1980, with a program from another supplier "that was really nothing but a glorified calculator," he recalls.

But he was impressed with how a computer could make a contractor's life easier. So he brought estimating software into his company only six months after he started it. Despite experience with another system, he ended up with a McCormick Systems product—and he has stuck with the company ever since.

However, Bubba Bajer will freely tell you that he's made some mistakes. One of them, he says now, was sticking with DOS-based estimating software much too long. In fact, he bought Windows software from McCormick (the 6000 series) in 1995—but left it on a shelf in his office until 1998.

Why?



*Fearing the hassle of conversion, Bubba Bajer, of Avis Electric in Mechanicsville, Va., continued using McCormick's DOS-based software—keeping the windows version on the shelf for years—but once the Windows version was up and running, he regretted the lost time.*

"Fear," he answers. "I was so comfortable with what I had, and it looked to me like it was a lot of hassle. I was just so worried about converting to Windows. But once we got it up and running, you know, I wish I had gotten into it five years ago."

### Fear Strikes Out

Bajer's fears were not entirely groundless. His company does some specialized work. Avis runs 20 to 25 electricians, and 60% of his work is direct digital controls. The company also does quarry work in the area, as well as a good deal of service work.

But that DDC work had led Avis Electric, over the years, to develop its own, customized database. Bubba Bajer wasn't sure what would happen to that database when he converted to Win-

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## McCormick Systems

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dows—and he couldn't bear the thought of redeveloping it from scratch.

"Finally, I decided in 1998 that I needed to do something, and I tried to do the database conversion here," he remembers. "I was still scared. So I talked with the McCormick people. I ended up sending the database to them on a disk, and they did the conversion, and got everything straight, and then sent it back to me.

"I know there are others out there like me. What these contractors need to understand is that, when you convert from DOS to Windows, McCormick will help you. It's not like they will leave you holding the bag or something. When I made this conversion, I was scared to death, but every time I ran into a problem they solved it.

"That's the amazing thing about McCormick. Years ago, if something wasn't right, you could talk to Jack McCormick. Well, now, you can still 'talk to Jack,' so to speak—only now it's Todd. I was originally a bit afraid we would lose that. You know, Jack should be really proud of Todd!"

### **Learning & Training**

One of Bajer's favorite features of the Windows 8000 software he's now using is the ability to share the company's proprietary database across his computer and those of his two estimators. "On the DOS unit, we couldn't share, and the result was, over time, everyone had added his own specials," says Bajer. "So we had three or four computers back then on which we did estimating—and we had three or four versions of our database. You can really screw up this way!

"Now, we've got one database. We share it. And if someone develops something neat in the database, we've all got it right away."

Recently, Avis replaced two long-time estimators with two new people. Bajer had heard about the McCormick offer for on-site training, and he jumped on it. "We had Erle Howard, who works on the East Coast, come here to teach us," he says. "I had gone to computer courses before, including from that other vendor when I worked for someone else.

"What I really liked about the on-site training was that we told Erle what we wanted to know, and what we wanted to do, and he came here and taught us

exactly that. It's not like what he told us came out of a can or something."

Beyond such a special event, Bajer is a believer in the annual McCormick User's Conference. "I didn't realize I was getting this when I became a McCormick customer, but you know, I learned more in that User's Conference watching other people doing things than you could believe," he says.

"When you're out there, everybody will show you what they are doing, and they're not scared to share information, because they don't compete with you. You see how people are doing the same things you are doing, and you pick up a lot of these little tidbits that really come in handy."

### **Advice for the Unconverted**

Asked what he would say to the remaining DOS users among his fellow contractors, Bubba Bajer has a quick response:

"Go to Windows now. You've got to bite the bullet. Yes, it will take you a couple of months to get orientated, but you will learn it quickly. It's not a problem. If you're worrying about it, stop worrying—it's not as bad as you think. Even if you're out here on the East Coast, you can get training, from Erle Howard, who's out here.

"What I've found is that this Windows version is so much easier for our two new folks. They picked it up really quickly. That's important, too." ✕

## **Come and See Us at Electric West**

If you're going to Electric West—Feb. 11-13 in Las Vegas—don't forget to look up McCormick Systems. We'll be in Booth #601.



You'll be able to take a look at, and get a demonstration of, our new award-winning time-and-material worker order software for handheld PDAs. And we'll have other recent new releases on-hand in the booth, along with a goodly number of McCormick Systems experts—to show you what's new, to answer your questions, and to listen to your comments, ideas, and needs.

If you'd like more information about Electric West, go to: [www.electricshow.com](http://www.electricshow.com). ✕

## What We're Telling The Media

# McCormick Now Exports Key Info To Contractor Accounting Systems

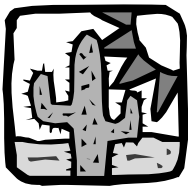


There's no time for re-keying the same information. Now, McCormick Systems has enabled its electrical contractor users to export information from their estimates to one of the industry's most popular accounting systems—with the touch of just a few keys. With this new updated Export function, users can send information to the Forefront systems from Dexter + Chaney. Job information, bid summaries, and more—already entered into the McCormick estimating system—will be electronically converted into a format Dexter + Chaney systems read. By eliminating the need to re-key the information, this new update will save contractors time and money. Dexter + Chaney's Forefront and Forefront Enterprises Construction Management Software products handle accounting, jobs, project management, service, equipment, materials, and more. See [www.dexterchaney.com](http://www.dexterchaney.com).

Privately owned McCormick Systems ([www.mccormicksys.com](http://www.mccormicksys.com)), of Chandler, AZ, provides high-productivity software for contractors to use in producing consistent, profitable estimates for electrical and voice-data-video work. ✕

**Did You Know...** You can use Windows cut and paste to copy information from one field to another. Control-C to copy, Control-V to paste!

## Let Your Pain Become a "Gain" in Arizona



April 10-13 are the dates for McCormick Systems' annual User's Conference. Perhaps you've never been to one of these. What will you get out of it?

The User's Conference gives you the chance to tell us, live and in person, about the problems you're having getting electrical estimating done quickly and profitably. Perhaps you're having a problem using our software; or perhaps you have an estimating problem that isn't associated with our software but that we might be able to solve.

In these face-to-face meetings—with dozens of contractors and estimators in the audience—we at McCormick get great new ideas for ways to help contractors. But, more importantly, you, the attendee, will come home with a head full of new ways to use our system, answers to knotty problems, and ideas from other companies that do not compete with yours.

To register for the conference in Tempe, AZ, contact Loriel McCormick via phone at 800-444-4890 or via e-mail at [lmccormick@mccormicksys.com](mailto:lmccormick@mccormicksys.com). ✕

## McCormick Is Tops at the NECA Show

*Electrical Contractor* magazine has chosen McCormick Systems' new T-Bill for handheld personal digital assistants (PDAs) as one of the top products at the 2001 NECA Show—earning us a ShowStopper award.



It's the sixth time McCormick has lassoed one of the *Electrical Contractor* awards; in years past, these were called by the name "Contractor's Choice." As described earlier, this addition to our T-Bill software allows your electricians and technicians to create an electronic work order in the field—one that can be signed "electronically" by the customer right there, on-site, on the handheld PDA.

Your field person can then transmit work orders to your home office wirelessly or by putting the PDA unit into a cradle at your office.

"We're very proud of winning another ShowStopper award," said President Todd McCormick. "It's an honor for us, and it proves that innovation remains important to us at McCormick Systems—along with customer service." ✕

## Should I Estimate This Project?



With this issue, our newsletter begins a monthly short section on Estimating—for professional estimators working for contractors, and the contractors themselves. If you have questions you'd like answered in this column in the future, e-mail them to Dick Manrod at [dmanrod@mccormicksys.com](mailto:dmanrod@mccormicksys.com) or call him at 800-444-4890.

The first step in making an estimate is deciding whether or not the project is worth estimating. Many important factors are a part of this decision. Each of the following could make the difference in whether or not to estimate the project and how the decision will affect your company.

- ✓ Does the size of this project meet within the guidelines and limitations of my company?
- ✓ Is a sufficient work force available to complete the project within the allotted time?
- ✓ Does our company have the expertise to complete this project within the project's scope?
- ✓ If engineering is needed, do we have the engineering capability needed?
- ✓ If bonding is needed, how will this project affect our company's bonding limits, and is that level of bonding available to our company?
- ✓ Do we have the proper tools and equipment to complete this project, and if not, what additional resources will be needed, and can we include those costs in the estimate and still be competitive?
- ✓ Does our company have the estimating capability to complete this estimate within the time allotted?
- ✓ Will this project adversely affect our company's cash flow and/or credit? Does the payment schedule fit our company's finances?
- ✓ Which and how many of our competitors will be bidding this project, and what is the cost of our estimate versus the likelihood of obtaining the project?
- ✓ Is this the best use of our estimating resources? Is there another project better suited for our Company?
- ✓ If we estimate this project, and are successful, will this project fit into our company's long-range plan?
- ✓ Are the owner and/or general contractor financially capable of paying for this project?
- ✓ If the quotation is to a general contractor, what is its history of payment, job completion, job progress, cooperation with subcontractors, safety record, clean up, and punch list? X

## 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 8 a.m. and wind up about 5 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. X

*Jan. 16–18*  
Advanced Management

*Jan. 23–25*  
Standard Estimating

*Feb. 6–8*  
Standard Estimating

*Feb. 20–22*  
Standard Estimating

*March 6–8*  
Standard Estimating

*April 8–9 (Tempe, AZ)*  
**Pre-User's Conference**  
Standard Estimating and  
Advanced Management