

News From



A Publication for GMS Accounting and Revolving Loan System Clients

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Part 1 - Accounting Questions, Suggestions and Comments from Conference

Thanks again to many of you who left questions, suggestions and comments about the accounting software, help manual and the annual conference. Most of the suggestions have been put on our windows work program to be discussed at our staff meeting in November or many were done and sent out in the June revisions. Also, any suggestions received for DOS software changes will not be made unless required by law, i.e. taxes, W2's, etc. The following lists some of the questions that were put in our suggestion box with responses. The remainder will be printed in next month's newsletter.

Q: Under New Budget Creation, why does it require an element number to be assigned in order to save it?

A: You are not required to enter an element number when creating a new budget name. In fact, in most cases a budget is for an entire project and not specific elements within a project.

Q: When you click on Find in the employee master file, if you have two employees with the same last name, it finds the first one in alphabetical order. I can't find the second one.

A: As stated in the help manual, you should click on Inquiry, find the employee, then click on the employee file button.

Q: If you enter the project "to" and "from" dates, they do not always appear on the R & E reports, Balance Sheet and General Ledger Listings reports.

A: We have only programmed to include the project dates on the Project/Element Charge Listing and R & E

continued on page 3

Backing Up Your Database

For those of you who have or are converting to the Windows Accounting or the Windows RLSS system now or in the future, we can't stress to you enough how important it is to make sure that you back up your database. Like other windows software, there is no back up procedure within the accounting system. At a minimum, everyone needs a good back up system, such as a tape back up. Most agencies have a tape backup system that is done daily, and we highly recommend that. In addition, we recommend that you back up your database to a CD after month end is closed as a historical backup and also copy and paste to a different folder every night..

You can find more information on backing up in your help file in your GMS system.

Windows Accounting Revisions

The latest windows accounting revisions were sent out on June 16, 2004 and a project1.zip on June 18, 2004. If for any reason you did not receive them, follow your instructions that were sent out with the windows accounting revisions on 3-23-04 to go to the GMS ftp site and download them from there. They will be located in the Acctg Revisions folder in a folder titled 6-16-04 and 6-18-04. After downloading, print out the memo and follow the installation instructions. There were many changes included with this revision, so the memo is rather lengthy.

In the event that none of the workstations in your agency can access our ftp site, send an email to sara4gms@gmsactg.com informing her of the contact name and email address that revisions should go to. In some cases, the contact name and email address gets changed and we are not getting informed of those changes.

In This Issue: RLSS Issues from 04 Conference....Fringe Benefit Pool...

RLSS Issues from 2004 Conference

As always, conference attendees had some good suggestions for improving the Revolving Loan Servicing System. Some of these ideas will be incorporated into our annual plan of work. Below is a sampling of those suggestions and how they may fit into our plans:

Suggestion: Conversations - incorporate an “alert” into the Loan Master files so users are aware there was a recently recorded conversation.

Response: Good idea – we’ll likely incorporate a process that reviews conversation dates and produces an on-screen alert if something has been recorded within the past 30 days.

Suggestion: Set screen default to 75% for reports.

Response: Although this might be a good idea, all reports would need to be changed, and this will take considerable programming time. Priority has to remain on developing supplements and improving reporting options, but this may be considered in the future. Of course, you can click on the tool bar % indicator and select 75% if desired.

Suggestion: Acknowledgment Form – allow spacing for optional messages, which can be up to 256 characters in length.

Response: Absolutely – watch for this in the next update.

Suggestion: Late Notices – add ability to pull by Loan Fund.

Response: At first, this seemed like a valid suggestion. However, many of our clients have multi-funded loans. This idea needs some development, and may become a part of our plan in the future.

Suggestion: Monthly Activity Report – page break so that the loan id, borrower name, and activity all appear on the same page.

Response: We will definitely research this possibility.

Suggestion: Include commas in numbers to make them easier to read.

Response: This is a good idea, but again, all reports will need to be changed and that is a time-consuming task which will likely not happen until higher priority programming changes are accomplished.

Suggestion: IRS 1098’s – have the program actually print the forms and data included on those forms, thus eliminating alignment issues.

Response: We’ll research this possibility, also.

Suggestion: Quick Date Listings – add ability to select by Loan Fund and/or Loan Officer.

Response: These improvements will make the feature more useful to most clients, and will be incorporated into our plan of work.

Suggestion: Amortization Schedules - when saving, allow entry of borrower’s name (along with loan id) and add an “inquiry” process button so user can review which schedules have been saved.

Response: Excellent idea – watch for this before the end of 2004.

Suggestion: Loan Master – add fields to jobs data to hold counts for both FTE’s and employees, and add a field for low-income count.

Response: Again, this will make reporting more useful, and so it will be incorporated into our scheduled improvements.

Suggestion: Optional Fields – allow dates to be entered as 6-digits with automatic slashes.

Response: Because of the structure of optional fields, this may not be possible at this time.

Suggestion: Exiting RLSS – add a screen warning “Are you certain you wish to exit RLSS?” to alert user if they accidentally click on the red X in upper right-hand corner of screen.

Response: Will do!

Suggestion: Tools – Supplement Install – add option to uninstall supplements.

Response: This seems to be something we can easily accomplish. Watch for it in future updates.

Suggestion: Allow editing of Confirmation Letters so that “as of” is bolded, etc.

Response: RLSS features are intended to be as generic as possible to meet the needs of the majority of our clients. With the export feature, letters can easily be transferred to Microsoft Word and edited as desired.

Call Sara at the Maryland office to arrange for yearly billing on License/Warranty and service fees and receive a 7.65% discount!

How The Fringe Benefit Pool Works

Most GMS clients use the Fringe Benefit Pool to allocate fringe benefit costs to programs. Using the pool, costs accumulated to element 998000 are automatically distributed to programs monthly using the ratio of year to date fringe benefit expenses to the base, which typically is year to date salaries including leave by employee class.

Establishing the Fringe Benefit Pool

Use of the fringe benefit pool begins with the definition of fringe benefit expense categories and the assignment of fringe benefit expense codes. Generally, fringe benefit expense categories include FICA, unemployment, health insurance, workers compensation, life insurance, pension and the like. Most GMS clients code fringe benefits in the 50600 to 51500 area of their chart of accounts - although any allowable expense code may be used.

Once individual fringe benefit items are defined and assigned, a determination must be made as to which classes of employees are to share in the cost of a particular benefit. This determination will permit you to use separate fringe benefit rates for each class of employee - to allocate the appropriate fringe benefits to the appropriate employees.

Within the system you are able to assign each employee to one of the employee classes. Typically classes such as full time, part time and temporary help are used. Normally fringe benefits are extended differently to these classes. For example, FICA, unemployment and workers compensation may apply to all employees. Health and life insurance, by contrast, might be extended only to full time employees. Generally, we recommend making this determination using eligibility as the criteria. Thus, all employees eligible to receive pension should share in the cost of pension.

This classification of fringe benefits is maintained in a setup file. When the system was first installed, the GMS Field Staff helped you set up your Fringe Benefit Matrix. Whenever you add a benefit or a personnel policy changes that affects a fringe benefit, you must consider the implications for your fringe benefit pool and matrix. Matrix assignments print on your monthly Fringe Benefit Rate Computation and Analysis. To change the matrix, in windows, go to Tools, Cost Allocation Setup and select Fringe Allocation. In DOS, from the main menu select Month End Processing, Cost Allocation, and Fringe Benefit Rate Computation and Analysis. When asked for the first three letters of the month, enter X to access the Fringe Benefit Matrix. In DOS this matrix is also used to compute fringe benefits whenever Quick Financials are run.

Using The Fringe Benefit Pool

To use the fringe benefit pool, charge expenses to element 998000 (fringe benefit pool) and to the appropriate line item expense category. Any expense charged in this manner will be automatically posted to the fringe pool.

When you run Month End - Cost Allocation - Fringe Benefit Rate Calculation and Analysis, your fringe benefit amounts will be analyzed, fringe benefit rates will be computed by employee class and resulting allocations posted to all programs using account 50500 (or another fringe designation) Fringe Benefits. Since rates are computed on a fiscal year to date basis, any adjustments you may make to salaries or benefits will automatically cause fringe benefit rates to be recomputed and resulting distribution charges posted.

Accounting Questions from 2004 Conference continued from page 1

Reports by Project and Element. The other reports are based on current fiscal year amounts and did not seem appropriate except for the Project/Element Charge Listing which is sometimes given as a subsidiary report to the R & E reports.

Q: How can we have a deduction that will deduct a certain percentage of net disposable earnings when the employee earns varying amounts each paycheck?

A: In the revisions that went out on June 16, 2004, there is a new payroll setup called Garnishment setup. That is intended to do exactly what the question is. In addition, if you have other deductions besides mandatory taxes that need to be subtracted from gross wages before applying the percentage, those can also be set up in the Garnishment setup.

Q: Can't void vouchers be set up to automatically void so the operator doesn't have to enter the negatives?

A: That would only work if you wanted to void a voucher that you had not paid at all and assume you want the entire voucher voided. There are many cases where the operator only wants to void part of the unpaid voucher. The software wouldn't know which distribution line the operator would want voided.

Q: We would like to have a summary total of all batches to compare with the batch log totals at month end.

A: A Batch Analysis has been added to the system and was sent with the June revisions.

Q: In the Payment Selection window in A/P Processing, it would be nice to be able to select by voucher batch.

Continued on page 4

A: This also has been included with the June revisions.

Q: Can't the pull down menus in several areas be wider?

A: We have added horizontal scroll bars to many of the combo boxes that were not very wide and sent out in the June revisions.

Q: In vouchers, if a batch is posted, why can't you click on the voucher entry tab and click on the Find button?

A: This was an oversight and was changed and included with the June revisions.

Q: In the General Ledger with Current Detail, why is it not printing anything in the description column for cash receipts?

A: If you don't enter anything in the customer field, it will be blank. If you have A/R installed, the customers can be set up in the customer setup file or just type in who you received the check from. If you don't have the A/R installed, you can set them up under the vendor master file or just type them in.

Q: I think we should be able to unpost timesheet batches or at least be able to change the elements in the grid.

A: We can't allow unposting a timesheet batch because it has been processed and saved through payroll. In the future, we could discuss allowing changing only the element and paycode fields that presently exist in a posted batch. However, we need to think through all of the ramifications of what could happen.

Q: Is there any way to create a more user friendly process for bank reconciliation? The screen in O/S Check Reconciliation is small and you can only arrow down to each check number which is time consuming.

A: Marking a range of cleared checks is much faster than selecting each check individually. It will also allow you to just clear one check under the Mark a Range of Cleared Checks button. Also, in the grid, you can drag the column headings to resize them.

Q: In Recurring Batches, I have entries that only the amount needs to be changed in my new batch, can this be changed to only go into that grid instead of deleting the entire line and re-entering?

A: We changed journal entries, accounts receivable, timesheets, expense reimbursements and cash receipts that are not referencing an invoice number to allow editing amounts in the grid rather than deleting and re-entering the line. This change was included in the June revisions. Vouchers previously allowed making changes in the grid.

Year End Closing Entries is a Great Time Saver!!!

Over 225 GMS accounting clients have found how much time is saved when closing their books at year end by using Supplement #398 Year End Closing Entries. It's not difficult coming up with the correct amounts when closing out the cost allocation pools and control accounts at year end, but it can be very time consuming to manually write out the entries.

The Year End Closing Entries supplement includes software to produce the final posting amounts for leave and comp time accruals, closing the fringe benefit and indirect cost pools and closing the salary, fringe and indirect control accounts to the project equity accounts. For those agencies that use service unit allocations, special allocations/internal base or cost allocation locks, software is also included to produce the appropriate closing entries.

Revenue recognition worksheets can be displayed for you to make the final adjustments for match, accounts receivable or closing to a net asset account. Work papers can be printed for you and your auditor which leaves a great audit trail and backup support for the final entries that are prepared. Based on all of the calculated amounts discussed above and the revenue recognition entries prepared, you can automatically post and print a trial balance worksheet with all of your adjusting entries for your review of all the accounts before the automatic preparation of the journal entries.

This supplement will allow you to utilize your time in more important financial management activities than hand writing journal entries! This supplement was rewritten in the windows version and released in June of 2003. For more information on the windows version of this supplement, please refer to the Windows Supplement Catalog at our website at www.gmsactg.com. For windows clients, you may read up on it in our help section under GL, GL supplements. For DOS clients, you may read up on it in your electronic user manual under the Year End section in Supplements and Enhancements.

***Enjoy
your summer!***

