

News From



A Publication for GMS Accounting and Revolving Loan System Clients

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Reminder about Windows Licenses

When GMS clients upgrade to or new clients purchase the Windows Accounting or RLSS system, they purchase the number of licenses which is based upon the user names that are set up. It is the responsibility of each agency to notify GMS if they want to purchase additional licenses so a new license agreement can be sent. On the next invoice you receive, in the upper right corner of the invoice next to Acct and/or RLSS and a Y, you will see a number printed if you are a windows client. This number represents the number of licenses that you have requested and are presently paying for. You should verify your user setup under Tools, to make sure that the number of user names set up match the number printed on our invoice. If the number of user names that you set up are different than the numbers printed on your invoice, you need to send an email to sara4gms@gmsactg.com requesting a new license agreement.

The GMS Supplement Catalog for Windows software is on our website at www.gmsactg.com in pdf format. Print a copy for yourself or just review the supplements that are available. The easy access to the catalog assures you of the most up-to-date information on supplements.

The GMS offices will be closed Thursday, November 25th and Friday November 26th in observance of the Thanksgiving Holiday! We wish the best holiday season to you and your families.

Attention Rev2000 and RLSS2000 Clients

Just a reminder that as of 12/31/04, GMS is no longer supporting or providing service on the Rev2000 version of the GMS Accounting System or the RLSS2000 version of revolving loan software. As of the time this newsletter article was written there were only 21 Rev2000 accounting clients and 11 RLSS2000 clients. In a memo sent earlier this year that made this announcement, it described the GMS options that were available. You were given two GMS options:

- (1) Upgrade to the windows version of GMS Accounting for \$2000.00 or RLSS for \$1000.00.
- (2) Upgrade to the Rev2001 DOS version of GMS Accounting for \$500.00 or RLSS2001 for \$250.00.

There was some confusion with certain clients that thought we were no longer supporting or providing service to any DOS client. **That is not true. We will continue supporting and providing service for the Rev2001 DOS version of accounting and the RLSS2001 version of revolving loan software. The date and year of when we will be discontinuing support and service for the DOS systems has not been established as of this time. (If the letters on your menu are all in capital letters, you have the 2000 version. If you have both upper and lower case letters on your menu then you have the 2001 version.)**

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Tax Form Season is Upon Us

For those of you who have ordered your 2004 tax forms from GMS, we thank you for your order and encourage you to check your order confirmations to ensure that all the proper forms and services ordered from GMS are correct. The appropriate W2,1099 and 1098 software revisions will be sent with the December 2004 GMS software revisions. GMS will begin shipping forms the last week in November, so that you can expect to receive your forms via UPS beginning the first week in December.

For clients who have requested GMS print their forms for them, the normal turn around time is 1 week once we have received your completed diskette(s) or files via email. Windows clients who have requested GMS print their forms for them will zip up their database and email it in. Remember, if you have requested GMS print 1099 or 1098 forms, you must use Supplement #330 Complete 1099's or Supplement #804 RLSS 1098's to prepare the diskette you send to GMS.

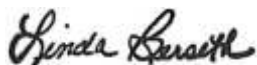
The December mailing from GMS will also include all software and instructions for those clients who have requested that GMS prepare the IRS Magnetic Media for their agency. Most orders will be shipped via UPS unless otherwise specified, and the shipping fee will be applied to the total of your tax form order. UPS delivery usually ranges from 3-5 days.

It is not too late to order your tax forms. GMS will accept all tax form orders up until December 1, 2004, however, a 10% late fee will be applied to all orders received after October 31, 2004. If you have questions please call the GMS office at ext. 1.

D e a r F r i e n d s ,

Later this month, the GMS Staff will join together in Cleveland, Ohio to hold our annual staff meeting. At this meeting we will be reviewing all of the suggestions we have received this year and will be establishing our 2005 work programs for both the accounting and revolving loan systems. We will also be finalizing the agenda for next year's annual conference, discuss our service policies and procedures and go over any administrative matters required. We value the input we receive from our clients and appreciate the suggestions we receive. If you have additional comments to make on any of the above topics, please send an email to service4gms@gmsactg.com, attention Linda.

Sincerely,



Linda Berseth, President/CEO

Computer Requirements for New Software Release

If you are upgrading to the new windows accounting or GMS-RLSS this year, we want to prepare your organization for the new software as some of you may have to upgrade your current computer or purchase new equipment. The new software will run under all Windows version environments so it doesn't matter if you have Windows 98, 2000, Millennium, XP or NT. Your computer must have Microsoft Access, version 2000 or higher installed. If you use the RLSS software you must have Microsoft Excel 2000 or higher installed. We would suggest a Pentium II or higher computer with no less than 32 MB of memory and at least 40 megs (30 for RLSS) of hard drive space just for the GMS system. (That does not include the space you will need for all other applications, i.e.. Access, operating system, etc.) All applicable updates and service packs must be installed.

Service Policy during GMS Staff Meeting

The GMS annual staff meeting will be held on November 21-23, 2004. From 9:00 am to 5:00 pm EST on November 22nd and from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm EST on November 23rd, we will check the service call voice mail and email every two hours and return emergency calls ONLY. One service staff will be available from 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm EST on November 23rd since all other GMS staff will be traveling. **Service calls sent in by fax will not be responded to until Wednesday.** For emergency calls, you should call the toll free number and leave a message or send an email. There will NOT be service available after 5:00 pm EST during those two days. If calls can be returned on Wednesday, November 24th or the following week, please specify so when placing your service call or wait until then to call.

There will be no service staff monitoring the Service Chat Room on Monday or Tuesday of that week. We will be discussing our client service during the staff meeting, so if you have suggestions or ideas on how we can improve service, please contact any member of the GMS Service Staff.

We hope that this two day temporary change in service does not inconvenience your agency greatly. We will resume our normal service hours on Wednesday, November 24, 2004.

GMS Service Call Numbers:

Voice Mail: 800/933-3501

Fax: 301/933-3502

Email: service4gms@gmsactg.com

RLSS Windows: Printing and Interpreting Reports

Reports within the Windows program are very similar to those in DOS. Standard reports include:

- Master File
- Current/Non-Current Balances
- Monthly Activity Report
- Analysis by Fund
- Journal Entry
- Accrued Interest Analysis
- Payment Status Report
- Borrower Profiles
- Aging Report
- Portfolio Statistics

In order for reports to produce accurate information, Loan Master files must contain the data needed to process the report. For example, if Maturity Date is not completed, the Aging Report will be unable to determine when the loan is due to be repaid in full. It is especially important to complete as many fields as possible on the Loan Terms tab of Loan Master files. If a report produces information that you feel is incomplete or inaccurate, review the Loan Master File to verify all pertinent fields contain valid data.

Additionally, the loan history must be correct and up-to-date. An accurate “next payment due” (completed when loan activity is recorded) is vital to creating accurate delinquency reports. The two primary delinquency reports are Payment Status Report and Aging Report. The number of days a loan is considered late is based on the days elapsed between the “next payment due” date and the report cut-off date. If, for example, a loan’s next payment is due December 1, 2004, and the report cut-off date is December 31, 2004, the loan will appear as 30 days late. This calculation also controls the number of payments delinquent as reported on the Aging Report.

The majority of the reports require a cut-off date. Loan activity with an activity date beyond the cut-off date will not be included in the report. This feature allows you to pull reports retroactively when necessary, especially important as a tool for auditing purposes.

A search criterion on most reports includes fund, county, city, status, loan officer, loan type, and borrower type. If specific criteria is not selected, all loans will be included in the report. The exception is delinquency reports. If the loan balance is zero, it will no longer appear on the report. More than one fund, county, etc. can be included by clicking on the desired selection, then holding down the ctrl key while clicking on subsequent selections.

Once the search criteria has been narrowed by, for example, limiting the funds to be included, it is necessary to select the process button “Clear Selections” before pulling the report again. Simply removing the dot from the “no” box will not clear the programming commands, resulting in a report that likely does not include the information expected. “Clear Selections” will result in the opportunity to begin the selection criteria again. Another way to accomplish this same task is to “Exit” the report screen and select the report again.

Utilizing Master Query can create additional reports. All fields within Loan Master files and optional master fields, as well as pertinent information from the loan history, is available to be searched for specific data. These same fields are available to be included on the report. Master Query uses Excel for the actual report production. This offers the option to add calculations, formulas, edit fields, include titles, etc. Master Query can also be utilized to produce mailing labels.

An additional feature of all RLSS reports is exporting. By using this option, reports can be emailed to staff, clients, or auditors. The data may also be exported into a Word document or Excel. This allows you to print on letterhead, add an inside address, or reformat as desired.

Keep in mind that utilizing any option from the Reports menu, or Master Query, will not alter the data within the database. They simply utilize the existing data. For this reason, feel free to explore the many options offered for reporting. With a little practice, you can become a whiz at producing reports that will benefit your loan counselors, administrators, and auditors.

For January 1 Fiscal Year GMS Clients...

For GMS clients who are converting to the Windows version of accounting system as of January 1, we will be doing the conversions and installations during the first two weeks in December, 2004. Since there will be no year-to-date payroll or vendor 1099 information to be converted, the timing of doing these conversions is basically irrelevant. We just want to make sure that we have all of the W2 and 1099 program revisions included at the time we prepare your CD’s. This will also give you more time to get your chart of accounts and budgets entered prior to January 1. This should take a lot of the pressure off of your staff and the GMS staff around the holiday season. However, your leave balances will have to be revised to reflect the correct balance as of the last paycheck issued in December. To help us plan our staff schedules, if you are planning to upgrade as of January 1, please submit your order through our web site at www.gmsactg.com.

You May Be at Risk !

Prior to the time you start using either of the GMS Windows programs, it is emphasized to you how important it is to have the latest service packs installed for Microsoft Access. We also tell you to make sure you have the latest service packs for the Windows Operating System. This is an ongoing process and someone in your organization should be checking to see if any new service packs have been released. Also there are patches that are released that also resolve certain issues that may affect your database. Each workstation should connect to the Microsoft website and under both the windows operating system and Microsoft Office, you can have it check to see if there are any updates or patches that have not been installed on that computer. This should be done on a regular basis at least every few weeks or at a minimum once a month. If your agency employs an IT staff person, they may be the one responsible for keeping all computers updated. However, each person who runs either GMS program should be responsible for making sure that their workstation has the most recent updates. Just about every week we run into a problem with someone's database because they have not installed the latest service packs, especially for Microsoft Access. At the present time, the latest service packs for Microsoft Access are:

Microsoft Access 2003

Service Pack 1

Also need Jet 4 database (SP8) and MDAC 2.8

Microsoft Access 2002

Service Pack 3

Microsoft Access 2000

Service Pack 3

To check to see if your workstation has the latest service pack, open Microsoft Access. Click on Help and About Microsoft Access. At the end of the line that has the version of Access, it should tell you what service pack is installed, i.e. SP3.

Can Software Assist Your Agency in Tracking Fixed Assets?

The answer to that question is "probably yes". However, the size of your agency and the quantity of fixed assets will determine if computerizing your inventory is economically beneficial to you at this time. No matter if you own 20 or 2000 fixed asset items, keeping the inventory on your computer can eliminate losing paper copies, rewriting when errors occur and simplify storage. Using the supplement can simplify depreciation rather than doing the calculation

in a spreadsheet, if that is where you keep your listing of fixed assets.

GMS offers Supplement #357 Fixed Asset Inventory which makes it easy to maintain and keep track of agency fixed assets. The DOS Fixed Assets software and data is located in a separate directory from your GMS Accounting and Financial Reporting System. Therefore, it will not have to be brought forward from one year to the next. Windows Fixed Assets consists of several tables that are kept in your database.

Setup files are established for general ledger codes, funding source codes, location codes, description codes, depreciation codes and the default drive used in backing up. Funding source codes have an unrestricted or restricted field to designate if the fixed asset was purchased with local funds or grant/contract funds.

Depreciation is automatically calculated on a straight line basis for those items specified as "depreciable". A depreciation schedule and analysis may be printed at any time for documentation. In DOS, "Ask For Fixed Assets" permits you to request certain variables of information on fixed assets. The information requested may be displayed or printed. Print options include a roster, labels, depreciation schedule, analysis, profiles, and cards. In Windows you can get Fixed Asset Listing and Depreciation Schedule, Analysis by Funding Source, Analysis by Location Code, Analysis by Depreciation Code and Analysis by GL Code. Using Report Writer, you can produce any type of report using the fixed asset tables and sort a variety of different fields. The wide variety of specific category requests can be very useful for doing the physical inventories, reconciling to the general ledger accounts, and responding to grant/contract documentation requirements.

Whether you use the GMS supplement or not, it is very important to maintain a complete fixed asset inventory and conduct physical inventories at least once every two years.

To learn more about the DOS version of Supplement #357 Fixed Asset Inventory, refer to your Accounting Electronic User Manual. To learn more about the windows version of Supplement #357 Fixed Asset Inventory, refer to the Help manual. If you would like to order the supplement or have questions about it, please place a service call which can be done from the GMS website or email service4gms@gmsactg.com.

Plan now to attend the
20th Annual Financial Management
Conference May 22-27, 2005 in San
Antonio, Texas!