News From GMS

A Publication for GMS Accounting and Revolving Loan System Clients

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Q & A from the Suggestion Box at conference

Several notes and suggestions were left in the suggestion box at conference. However, every year there seem to be fewer and fewer suggestions. Obviously, the revisions to the software since the Windows version has been released have contributed to the decline in suggestions. In this article, we'll try to answer some of the questions and address some of the comments we received. If your notes are already included on our work program or they have been added as suggestions, they will not be addressed in this article.

Q: Under the Help manual, have and stress the importance of assigning new project and element numbers for each new year.

A: Presently under GL Master files, GL codes, Things you should know, it states "When a 30000-39900 code is entered you have the option to enter the beginning and ending dates for the project. A new project number (30000-39699) should be set up for every new grant period. New program element codes would also be set up for every new grant year.

Q: Instead of "Print" to screen, it would be less confusing if the button was labeled "display".

A: The Print button means you can print to screen, print to paper or print to a file. Only after you click on the Print button, can you access the icons for the printer or the export options.

Q: We used to have step down locks in cost allocation locks. Is this available or can you give some instructions on how to do this within the system now?

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Present versions of Windows Software are:	
Accounting: 1.2.251	**RLSS:1.0.302**

Using the Backup and Compact/Repair Database Utility called BackupDB.exe

When the March 2007 revisions were released, we included a new backup utility along with instructions for setting up a shortcut on the desktop. This utility allows you to select the database you wish to backup and/or compact and repair. Presently this feature should only be used by accounting clients. Once the database is selected, clicking on the Compact Database button automatically runs compact and repair. The Backup Database button automatically makes a backup copy of the database in the folder in which the database is located.

It is important to understand that everyone must be out of the GMS database before either of these steps is run from the shortcut on the desktop. Also, please be aware that the backup is not being placed in the Backup folder on your C drive but rather in the Convert/Convert1, etc. folder in which the conversion.mdb is located. If you want the backup to be on your local hard drive, you will need to copy and paste it there.

In addition, it is important that you understand that the new automatic backup feature does not replace any other backup procedures such as nightly tapes, burning a cd, copying to a flash drive, etc. It also does not replace the recommended before and after payroll backup process. It is recommended that you continue to copy and paste the conversion.mdb file into the Before Payroll Backup folder prior to running leave balance processing and into the After Payroll Backup folder after completing the payroll processing.

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A: If you had that option when you used the DOS version, you had special programming done to accomplish that. In the Windows version, what you can do rather than using step down locks, you can lock Program A to Program B. When Program B ends, you need to lock it to Program C. At the same time, lock Program A to Program C also, and you've accomplished the same thing as in step down locks.

Q: Would like the ability to filter reports, i.e. down to one vendor or all checks to a certain vendor from a cash account.

A: We won't be adding the drill down detail to any more of the month end menus until we re-write the software in VB.net since it all has to be rewritten at that time. To see all checks to a certain vendor from a cash account, if Payment History does not give the information you need, use the Report Writer. Select the table called tblGLDetail if that gives you the columns you need . Then select all of the columns you wish to see on your report. Put in a condition that GL code is equal to your cash account. Put in a second condition the description (vendor name) starts with ___. You can also select date ranges if you wish or any other conditions of the fields that exist in that table. Another option would be to find the Vendor in the Vendor master file and click the Inquiry button. All vouchers for that vendor will appear. If you click on the voucher, the payment information will appear below the voucher.

Q: We have a long list of codes. It would be helpful if when selecting codes, we could type in the codes to get to where they are and to select them.

A: We have to assume this is in reference to list boxes, since combo boxes allow you to type the code. In list boxes, such as the ones used in the Transaction Code Listing, if you click on the first item in the list box that will put your cursor within the list box. Then type in a 5. You will see the highlights move to the first GL code that starts with a 5, which is 50000.

Q: In Voucher Import, can the option to import in code or alpha order be added since the file comes to us in alpha order?

A: Even if the voucher batch gets imported in voucher number order, you can always go to Voucher Entry and specify the batch to be printed in alpha order, however, the voucher numbers assigned were still assigned in code order. This will be added to our work program.

Q: Can you please come up with a FMLA tracking system? It would be good if it could keep a running total that can also print on the check stub.

A: We attempted to do this a couple of years ago. Five GMS clients were contacted to get their policies on FMLA. None of them were the same. We thought we could incorporate some kind of a matrix to be set up. But in each case since no FMLA hours are awarded, only those taken can be tracked. Even when I suggested they designate which leave balance to have the FMLA leave taken from, that didn't fulfill the needs of all the agencies. Maybe as time goes on, we can think of a way to accommodate this for everyone.

Q: Have you thought about option of taking the Social Security # off of the deductions listings? (There were several notes about the same issue)

A: We plan to make sure that all reports that presently print the SS# will be changed to give the option to include it or not.

Q: Please make the Employee Find function much easier.

A: Our Find button allows you to enter the employee code or last name. The problem comes when you have employees with the same last name. We suggest in that case you use the inquiry button. We know we need to make it more convenient to easily find the employee file you are looking for.

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CPE Credits from Annual Conference

We received a couple of questions regarding earning CPE credits at the GMS Annual Conference. We do offer these credits, however, different states have different requirements on the form or information to be included. If you attended the conference and want to receive CPE credits, send the form and information required in your state to the GMS office in Maryland, attention Liz Collins. We will return the signed copy to you. You can also email a list of sessions attended to liz4gms@gmsactg.com and she will return a signed letter listing the sessions and hours to attach to your materials for submission.

Don't Forget Your 50% Supplement Credit!

Agencies whose staff attended the GMS Annual Conference are entitled to a credit of up to 50% of the cost of their regular conference registration on all supplements ordered between the time of registering and July 31, 2007. For those agencies whose staff registered for and attended the intensives following the conference, the 50% supplement credit has also been applied. For agencies that sent some employees to the regular conference and other employees to the intensives, the 50% credit has been applied against the larger of the two-conference or intensive registrations. The credit will not be applied against the combination of both conference and intensive registrations.

This is a great way to save $$ on your conference attendance. You can place your orders on the GMS website at www.gmsactg.com, by email to service4gms@gmsactg.com, fax your order to the Maryland office at (301)933-3502 or call the Maryland office at (800)933-3501 and the credit will automatically be applied. Supplement orders cannot be taken by any other GMS staff not located in the Maryland office.

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Q: Please include an option for "additional information" in Cash Receipts History.

A: We presently show the description of cash receipts and vouchers in the Cost Summary supplement. The suggestion has been noted.

Q: Several comments were received during conference and in notes left in the suggestion box regarding the new print dialogue box in Existing Budgets.

A: We will be changing this so once the budget name is selected under Existing Budgets, when you click on Print, that budget name will automatically be checked and it will default to "by Element".

Q: Can the inquiry screens be programmed to be "resizeable"?

A: Yes, they can. However, in visual basic, if you resize the screen, the contents also are resized so you do not get any additional information. In VB.net, it will work to resize them and get more information on the screen.

Q: Make the combo boxes, especially in CR data entry wider so the user can see the entire description of a code.

A: The combo boxes are as wide as the field it is in. That is why we have the right and left arrows so you can scroll to the right to see more of the description. We can make the GL and element code fields a little larger. In VB.net you'll be able to stretch all of the screens.

Q: There should only be one person with access to un-post or limited access to un-post.

A: The staff discussed this last November at our staff meeting and decided not to assign rights to the post and unpost button, but we added a Month End Period tab to the user setup. The person who has access to the user setup can designate a month ending period. In all books of entry, it will check that table and not allow anyone to edit or post batches that have a posting period equal to or earlier than the designated date.

Q: Why can't the system handle a credit during a check run i.e. keep until it has an amount to apply it to without flagging us?

A: If you don't select a credit voucher for payment, there will be no flag. It's because you select it for payment that it won't let you continue in the process.

We Need Your Conference Evaluations Please!

We rely on the evaluations turned in by attendees of the GMS Conferences in a big way! Suggestions for new sessions are discussed every year by the GMS staff and comments about sessions held are reviewed and discussed to attempt to make them better the next year. Ideas about general topics also help us when we are looking for outside guest speakers. If we only receive evaluations from 10% of the attendees and 1 or 2 people didn't like a session or want to add a new session, it's not a very good average of opinions for the staff to make decisions on. The same is true when rating sessions. With all of the comments and ratings, the staff really looks hard at what you liked and didn't like and what new things you are looking for. If you attended the Annual Conference in Las Vegas and haven't had a chance to return your evaluation, please mail or fax it to the Maryland office. If you need a copy, please email your request to service4gms@gmsactg.com. If you wish to talk about your ideas, please call Liz Collins at extension 2.

GMS Import Features

Much interest was shown at the recent GMS conference regarding importing information into the GMS system. The import features are discussed below.

GMS offers three Import Supplements - #413 Voucher Import, #411 Timesheet Import and #417 Invoice Import. In each case the import feature allows the user to create a batch by importing invoices from an Excel, text (comma, tab) or comma separated value (CSV) format. The Help manual for each supplement explain the order in which the spreadsheet(s) must be created. Once the spreadsheet file is created you need only to locate the file, enter the posting period and any other required information and click the Import button. The batch will automatically appear on the screen.

The Budget Import feature is included in the GMS master program and is not a supplement. If you normally prepare budgets in Excel, this feature allows you to import the budget into GMS without having to rekey the entire budget. The Help manual lists the order in which the information must be set up in Excel in order for the import feature to work properly.

If you use Supplement #416 Check Signatures the signatures are saved as jpg files and imported into the check signature set up fields. When the designated signer or signers change new signature files can be created and imported into the set up file. Instructions for preparing the signature files are included in the Help manual or GMS will prepare the signature files for you upon request. There is a signature image order form in PDF format on the GMS website. These supplements can be ordered from our website at www.gmsactg.com.

Using RLSS Master Query

Master Query is probably the most powerful and versatile component of the GMS-RLSS program. Beyond the standard selections on the Reports menu, Master Query can provide you with a variety of additional reports. All fields found within Loan Master file, including Optional Fields, can be queried to create a comprehensive report.

1 **Select the fields you wish to search** – clicking on the drop menu will produce a list of all fields found within Loan Master, as well as some fields related to loan activity, an example being new balance. Think about which loans you want to appear on the report. For example, if you are looking for loans over $10,000, select "loan amount". If you are looking for loans that have made a payment recently, select "activity date."

2 **Search Criteria** – once you have identified which field to search, step 2 gives you opportunity to determine what data you want to find within that field. If you are looking for loans over $10,000, select "greater than" and enter 9999. If you are searching for loans that have made a recent payment, select "greater than" and enter the date as mm/dd/yy.

Note: once you have completed step 1 and 2, a screen prompt will appear asking "Do you wish to make more selections?" The search can be narrowed further by clicking on "yes" and making more selections in step 1.

3 **Fields to be included on report** – the field(s) selected in step 1 should also be included in step 3 to allow verification that the proper loans were identified, and is selected by clicking on the desired field. Any other available field in step 3 may be included on the report. To select more than one field in step 3, hold down the ctrl key and click on the additional fields.

4 **Report Format** – select "list the data" or "labels".

5 **Sort Options** – reports can be sorted by either the loan number or alphabetically.

Once the 5 steps are completed, there is an option to include the borrower's address. Another option is to save the report selections. This may be especially useful when creating a report that may be needed on an ongoing basis. If the saved criteria is later retrieved and the report created again, it will use updated information recorded in your database through adding or editing Loan Master files or through posting loan activity. Once you click on "prepare report" the program will launch Microsoft Excel and move the data into a spreadsheet. At that point, formatting, sorting, adding formulas and saving the report become Excel options.

Things to Remember: Some fields selected in step 1 relate to combo boxes within the Loan Master file. A good example is "gender", which when selected results in a display of "male" and "female", allowing you to check which gender is to be included on the report. Once you have selected the desired response, tap the enter key to move automatically to the "equal to" field in step #2. Click on the circle to the left of "equal to", then tap enter again to move the choice made in step 1 automatically into step 2.

If the data to be included on the report includes a date range, it is necessary to select that field twice in step 1. If, for example, you want to pull a report reflecting loans closed in 2006, in step 1 select "closingdate" and in step 2 enter "greater than" 12/31/05. When prompted for more selections, respond "yes" and again select "closingdate" in step 1. This time, in step 2 enter "less than" 01/01/07. The resulting report will show all loans with a closing date within 2006. Using Optional Fields in the report requires a few more steps, and is outlined in the Help section of the program.