



CAMletter


2nd Annual Users Conference

On May 21st, CAM Systems, Inc. kicks off its 2nd Annual Users Conference in Orlando, FL. This event is particularly significant, since for the first time, CSI will be providing training sessions on its new product, i-CAM. i-CAM is a Windows/Internet-based property management software solution that will eventually replace CAM II.

The theme of the conference, "Login to the future...", engenders the idea we hope to convey to our users. Namely, that we have progressed to a new level of technology and service that will benefit our clients for years to come.

Like last year's inaugural conference, we will be offering a wide variety of learning sessions. In addition, we will be offering two tracks; one for CAM II, the other for i-CAM. This format will allow property managers to send virtually any employee to the conference. New users can take advantage of many of the sessions in either track, or experienced CAM II users can attend sessions to brush up on their CAM II skills or learn how to transition to i-CAM.

As you may recall, we chose Orlando after conducting a survey of our readers in the first issue of CAMletter last year. Orlando (actually, Lake Buena Vista) was an excellent choice for our conference location. Besides the amusement and theme parks of nearby Disneyworld, there are many other attractions such as golf courses, restaurants, and shopping. Another benefit of this location is the relatively low cost of air travel and hotels.

In fact, if this is the first time you are reading about our 2nd Annual Users Conference, you can still sign up to attend. Don't wait too long though, we are quickly filling up and seating is limited. For more information, please call (800) CAM-9999, ext. 378, or visit our website at http://www.thecommunitiesgroup.com/regional_events.html. See you in Florida! 

Update from Business Development

TCG Technologies, LLC and CAM Systems, Inc. are pleased to announce three new strategic alliances. These new alliances will enable TCGT/CSI to expand our services to you. TCGT is now selling and supporting ACCUCert, a well-established Windows based tax credit certification and monitoring program. ACCUCert is slated to work with our i-CAM windows program to streamline the application and move-in process. ACCUCert can handle the full range of tax credit properties including


special set-asides.

Another new application partner, Electronic Funds Corporation has joined us. As their name implies, EFC processes rent checks through *Electronic Funds Transfer*. Instead of keying in rent check amounts, making up deposit slips, and going to the bank, this new application will either automatically deduct the rent from each tenant's account monthly, or you can swipe the check right on the spot. This new EFT service is projected to interface with i-

CAM to process monthly rental payments!

Mediator by 2Gather Technologies, is a web-based application which enables the user to send interactive dialogs via e-mail to prospective applicants as well as current residents.

If you are interested in any of these products, do not hesitate to inquire about them!

Sharon G. Jackman
Director
Business Development 

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CSI Handbook

In This Issue: AMS System

New Offices and Sales Representatives

Due to the tremendous growth we've experienced at our CSI office, we moved our programming and r&d staff to a new location in mid-town Atlanta. Along with their new digs, CSI staff have the added benefit of a cafeteria. (Editor's note: Now that's something to move for!)

Also in February, TCG Technologies, LLC opened a new Midwest distributorship in Detroit, MI. CAM Services of Michigan, Inc., headed by Patti Thompson, a long-time CAM II user, will run the office and handle new sales and support in Michigan.

To handle increased demand in the West, we're happy to announce that we have a new Sales Representative based in San Diego, CA. Dennis Dillon, also a CAM II user, will be handling new sales in the West Coast region.

What is the AMS system?

AMS stands for Automatic Maintenance Scheduler. This feature is located in the CAM II Maintenance module and is used in coordination with your on-site preventative maintenance program.

Who can use the AMS system?

Any CAM II user who has access to the Maintenance module.

What is it used for?

The AMS system is used to create a recurring work schedule that can be tailored for different maintenance projects. This is accomplished by prompting the user to create an AMS program for each maintenance project, which can be saved for later re-use. For example, one of the most popular items the AMS system is used for is creating the schedule, work orders, and tenant notifications for annual inspections. Other applications include; furnace filter replacement, smoke detector tests, and the daily grounds cleanup.

How do I create an AMS program?

From the main menu, you

press M,A, and select Add an AMS Program. In the first field, you give the program a description. In the next two fields, you can select the forms you want to use or leave them blank if you don't want to print. The estimated hours and technician fields are used to denote the amount of time spent at each unit and the technician who will perform the work, respectively. The next four fields are used to customize your work schedule. Next, you can input a range of units that will be part of the program. Remember—use "proj" if the program is for the project. The print work order toggle is what determines whether the system will print work orders immediately when the program is run.

How often can I have the AMS program schedule my work?

Each AMS program can be set to recur on a daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, and annual cycle. You select the cycle by pressing F9 while setting up your program.

Do I have to print the work orders and tenant notifications?

No, you have the option of

printing either one, both, or none when you setup each program.

How many AMS programs can I create?

As many as you want.

Once I create an AMS program, how do I make the system generate the work orders and tenant notifications?

As part of the AMS program setup, you are asked for a "lead time" in number of days, and the "start date" which represents the first day you want the project to start. When the computer system date is equal to the number of days in advance (lead time) of the start date, the user will see a new action item, F10—Schedule AMS, on the main menu. To print the work orders and notifications (if required), the user will press F10 and choose OK.

Can I change the work order and tenant notifications for each AMS program?

Like any other form letter in CAM II, you can also customize the work order and tenant notifications. After you've made the changes you want, you simply select the appropriate form from within the AMS program setup. ☞

HUD TRACS and MTCS Update

You may have been wondering why HUD did not implement the much anticipated (and feared) TRACS 2.0.1B format and MTCS 2000 system last year. In addition, many of you have expressed concern to our technical support staff about PC Sprintmail and its impending deactivation. During the March 7-8, 2001 TRACS industry meeting, these questions were answered.

The first quarter of HUD's 2001 fiscal year did not produce the changes mentioned because of budget

and funding delays. However, as of January (2nd quarter FY 2001), TRACS is fully funded and they can go ahead with the previously planned projects.

MTCS 2000 update:

- Implementation of the new system is now April 2, 2001
- There are three major planned and funded projects:
 - Implementation of TRACS 2.0.1B format
 - Replacement of PC Sprintmail
 - Revision and standardization of the 50059

HUD plans to complete all three projects by the end of the 2001 calendar year.

In addition, there are a few smaller projects that HUD plans to begin work on this year but may be cancelled or delayed due to inadequate funding or may not be approved by Congress.

Included in these projects:

- Complete re-write of the HUD 4350.3 handbook
- Standardization and automation of special claims processing
- Changes to the TRACS Web Query (Secure Con-

HUD TRACS and MTCS Update, cont'd

nect) system

Regarding the implementation of TRACS 2.0.1B, HUD plans to finalize changes to the MAT guide by the end of March. Immediately afterwards, HUD will begin testing the new format through the end of June. From July 1 through September 30, HUD will allow dual transmission of the TRACS 2.0.1A and 2.0.1B formats. Finally, on October 1, HUD will only process TRACS 2.0.1B transmissions.

Because HUD cannot process both TRACS formats in their nightly batch cycle, a schedule will be created to process each format on different nights. Initially, 2.0.1A submissions will be processed on 5-6 nights per week with the other 1-2 nights reserved for 2.0.1B submissions. As the October 1 deadline approaches, and as 2.0.1A submission volume decreases, HUD will alter the schedule to process 2.0.1B submissions on a more frequent basis.

It is important to note that, during the dual transmission period, TRACS users cannot expect a 48 hour response time on their submissions. Instead, response time will vary, depending on which TRACS version they submit and which TRACS version HUD will be processing that week. Users may view the TRACS processing schedule on the HUD TRACS Website. HUD encourages TRACS users to view this schedule before calling the TRACS hotline.

At last! HUD is beginning the process of replacing PC Sprintmail. As of January 1, 2002, the PC Sprintmail ser-

vice will be deactivated. This has prompted HUD to develop a new system which will allow users to send their TRACS files with any modem that is compatible with the Windows operating system using significantly more recent technology.

HUD has submitted a proposal to Congress that recommends replacing the PC Sprintmail system with a hybrid Internet-based system that will utilize web servers, HTTP, and dial-up networking. A future revision will include secure access directly through any Internet connection. HUD expects approval of the project by the end of March.

From the user's perspective, transmitting to TRACS will work much the same as before. There will still be an 800 number for the modem to dial into and the transmission process will be automated.

The real difference will be the technology involved in doing it. For example, instead of using PC Sprintmail as the software to connect and transmit, the dial-up networking component of the Windows operating system will be used. Instead of connecting to a mainframe computer and transmitting data with the decades-old Kermit protocol, users will be connecting to web servers using the HTTP Internet protocol.

Once Congress approves the proposal, HUD expects a 3 month period for development, then a 3 month beta program before implementation. HUD has tentatively projected full implementation of the new

system by October, 2001.

Alas, all these improvements won't come without a small price—this process will require new TRACS ID's to be issued. To accomplish this, HUD plans to send announcements to all TRACS users via Sprintmail and snail mail on how to obtain the new ID very soon.

HUD will update the 50059 facsimile again this year to make it consistent throughout the nation. HUD is currently working with NAHMA to redesign the form. However, they are also looking for volunteers to become part of the working group. If you are interested, you may send an e-mail to

judy_l_lemeshewsky@hud.gov.

Miscellaneous notes:

- HUD will require that all OA's and CA's adhere to the 2.0.1B format and submit to the new TRACS transmission system. If an OA has a problem with a CA who is asking or requiring them to do something that is not required in the 4350.3 handbook, they should first notify their HUD CA Monitor for help.
- The new Section 8 contract renewal guide is available for download on HUD's website.
- The fields offices will have a new special claims tracking system which will generate claim ids and match the amount to the MAT30 automatically.

We will provide more details on all these projects as they progress. Watch for it in the next issue! ☞

HUD TRACS Website:

<http://www.hud.gov/fha/mfh/trx/html/trxsum.html>

HUD MTCS Website:

<http://www.hud.gov/pih/systems/mctcs/pihmtcs.html>

HUD Section 8 Renewal Guidebook:

<http://www.hud.gov/fha/mfh/exp/guide/s8guide.html>

Announcing new Website for TCG Technologies, LLC!

Beginning the first week of April, we will be moving our web pages, currently located in The Communities Group Website, to our own domain —

<http://www.tcgtechnologies.com>

Be sure to bookmark this location in your Favorites folder.

About "...at a glance"

Beginning with this issue, we will be profiling employees who work for TCG Technologies, CSI, Inc., CAM Software and Support, and REAC Services. This regular column will introduce our readers to the people who work for them.



Evelyn...at a glance

Name: Evelyn Arias

Company: TCGT

Title: Office Manager

Start date: August, 1997

As Office Manager, Evelyn takes care of virtually all the things her co-workers don't have the time (or patience) to do. Over the past few years, Evelyn has even learned how

to provide some technical support to our Puerto Rico clients (she's fluent in Spanish), and she sets up new CAM II properties in her spare time. Evelyn always brightens up the office with her smile and good spirits. Outside of the office, Evelyn enjoys dancing to salsa mu-

sic and listening to her fiancée sing Spanish tunes with his band, Savotage. If you've ever visited our offices in Washington, DC, chances are you'll remember Evelyn. If you haven't visited us, believe us when we say "Evelyn's the hostess with the mostess!" ☞



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CAMletter

A quarterly publication for our valued users of CAM II: The Management System

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*Please Welcome our
Newest Members:*

Dennis Dillon

Joe Fitts

Ron Gray

Steve Harp

Sherman Jordan

Laine Sweezey

Patti Thompson

CAM II 2.63 Update

While waiting for HUD to begin implementing their changes, we have been preparing a new update file for download and mass distribution. Included in the file are changes to the General Ledger, Assisted Housing, and Reporting modules.

For the G/L, we have corrected a problem with the checkwriter where, if you started a new fiscal year in advance, and you tried to write a new check to the current year, the check transaction was written to the next (newly opened) fiscal year. Also related to this was a problem with importing the CLOGLAC (monthly report) into period 12 of the previous year while you were in period 1 of the new year.

In the Assisted Housing module, we made some more changes to the gross rate change processor. Specifically, PBE (utility allowance)

increases are now crediting tenant rent correctly, and lack of voucher date no longer causes a "data error" message in the record listing. For conventional properties using the gross rate change processor, choosing the effective date as of the lease end date is now working again.

Other changes in the Assisted Housing module were made to 50059 certification processor. We now prompt the user for the baseline indicator on the MAT10 and the mailing address same as tenant address indicator on the MAT15.

In the Reporting module, we have made changes to the Excess Income report and the 1098 form processor. The Excess Income report now correctly shows all units that qualify and the 1098 processor shows the correct year. The tenant lookup field has been enabled and the screens have been changed to reflect the

correct year being processed.

We don't anticipate making any more changes to CAM II version 2.63 unless we find serious problems. To distribute the new programming files, we will be conducting a mass-mailing to all registered 2.63 users and we will also be listing it as a download on our website.

The next major release for CAM II will be version 2.64, which will include changes for the new MTCS 2000 system, TRACS version 2.0.1B, and possibly the new TRACS transmission system. As of today, HUD has not guaranteed that they can implement TRACS 2.0.1B and their new transmission system in the same time frame. However, we are pushing for this to happen so you will only have to upgrade once.

If you have any questions about updating or upgrading CAM II, please give us a call!



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