



# COMPUTER CHRONICLES

November 2007

A newsletter of NMPP Energy and Salt Creek Software



## Value Support Plan to keep users on cutting edge

*Participants will always have most current software versions*

The PowerManager® software programs from the Nebraska Municipal Power Pool and Salt Creek Software have been a valuable tool for hundreds of municipalities around the nation for many years.

For more than two decades NMPP and SCS have met the needs of software users in the form of providing new and useful applications along with subsequent program upgrades to improve efficiency and keep users current amid evolving technology.

In mid-September NMPP and SCS implemented their Value Support Plan regarding software program upgrades and customer support to users. NMPP Chief Operating Officer Tim Sutherland recently answered some questions about the new plan:

### **Q. What is the Value Support Plan and why was it created?**

A. The Value Support Plan is the same service we have always provided, it's just a little different in concept. The plan ensures that users of the four core PowerManager® programs—Utility Billing/EasyClerk, Payroll, Inventory Plus and General Ledger/Accounts Payable—will always have the most up-to-date version of software.

With technology, especially software, once you develop a program and distribute it, the task of supporting and improving the program is never-ending. It's the same with any software you buy. Without upgrades or support, the product eventually becomes obsolete as

technology moves forward.

This plan will allow us to serve users in a timelier manner. Under the old plan, there would be one major upgrade each year to one of the core programs. That meant some users who only had one or two of the programs would only see program improvements once every three or four years. We believe this is too long.

Under the Value Support Plan, participants will pay an annual fee and receive annual upgrades for each of the programs. In addition, a customer support plan will be included. No matter if you are utilizing all the programs or just one, everyone will receive an upgrade each year.

### **Q. What will customer support include?**

A. Customer support phone consultation will be available to all participants Monday-Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. (CST) This is no different than the past.

However, for those not participating in the plan, hourly support rates will increase substantially. What we learned from the past is that those paying the annual support plan fee were in effect subsidizing the support plan for those either not participating or paying the hourly rate. Users may go a stretch without needing support, but when they need it, they need it immediately—a support staff person needs to be available every day of the work week, and that needs to be covered in the fees. Like insurance, it's a service you hope you never

need, but when you need it, you're extremely glad it's available.

### **Q. Are there other benefits to the new plan?**

A. Obviously, always having the most current version of the software application is the biggest benefit along with having built-in support. But, other benefits include regular communication and improved response to user needs. We will be able to supply improvements on a more timely basis.

### **Q. Will this new process cost my utility more money?**

A. The short answer is no. If you are a utility that has been supporting NMPP/SCS by staying current on software versions and participating in the software support program annual costs will remain about the same. If you have not stayed current and have not participated in the software support program your annual costs will obviously increase.

### **Q. Do all users have to belong to the plan?**

A. No, but those that choose not to sign up for the plan will only receive upgrades and support upon request through substantially higher prices. Users who participate in the plan are always ensured they will be up to date with whichever of the four software applications they are using and will have access to support anytime during the work week.

### **Q. How will the annual upgrades be distributed?**

A. They will be provided on a CD for easy installation to your current application.



## 2007 PowerManager® upgrade CD available

The PowerManager® 2007 upgrades are available. Among the new features include:

- New fund report (General Ledger)
- Budget billing reconciliation (Utility Billing)
- Deposit set-up (Utility Billing)

CDs will be mailed after a contract is signed and received. Contact Lana Claycomb at (800) 234-2595 or [lclaycomb@nmppenergy.org](mailto:lclaycomb@nmppenergy.org) for an upgrade contract or with any questions.

## PMUG Conference, Refresher Course workshops held in fall

The 18th Annual PowerManager® Users Group (PMUG) Conference was held September 19-21, 2007 in Bloomington, Minn. Mitch Mullins and Stan Reinke from Salt Creek Software and Lana Claycomb from NMPP served as instructors for the event.

The conference, attended by 31 participants from five states, included panel discussions and round table discussions on various topics relating to PowerManager® software programs. Comedian/magician David Harris served as entertainer for the event, which also included lots of networking activities with peers.

The 15th Annual NMPP Refresher Course was held in two Nebraska locations—Sidney and Lincoln, in October. There were 34 attendees from two states that attended the two-day workshops. Participants learned about the new 2007 upgrade CD as well as an overview of programs and discussion of several topics.



## Managing the Recycle Bin

The Recycle Bin icon, which resembles a trash can, is located on the desktop.

If no papers stick out of the recycle bin icon, the bin is empty. When files are moved to the bin, however, papers appear to be present in the trash can.

The following will explain how to use the Recycle Bin. You will learn how to ensure that deleted files go into the Recycle Bin and how to remove accidentally deleted files from the Recycle Bin. You will also see how to empty the Recycle Bin.

If you are sure you have deleted files and the Recycle Bin is empty, you need to make sure that it is ready to hold deleted files.

**To verify that deleted files go into the Recycle Bin, follow these**

### steps:

1. Point to the Recycle Bin icon located on your desktop, and click the right mouse button. A shortcut menu appears.

2. Choose the Properties command. The Properties dialog box appears on your screen.

3. In the Global tab, click the Use One Setting for All Drives option.

4. Make sure that a check mark **does not** appear in the Do Not Move Files to the Recycle Bin check box.

5. Click OK to save the settings and close the properties box.

### To restore a file that was accidentally deleted, follow these steps:

1. Double-click the recycle Bin icon. The Recycle Bin window appears with a list of the files it contains.

2. Select a file you want to restore.

3. Choose File, Restore. Windows will restore it to its original location. (To move a file out of the Recycle Bin, to a location different from its original, use the Cut and Paste commands on the Edit menu.)

*Note: The Recycle Bin window is actually a Windows Explorer window. The display options (including copying and moving files) are also available in this window.*

### To delete files in the Recycle Bin, follow these steps:

1. Select a file you want to delete.

2. Press the Delete key. The file is permanently removed from the Recycle Bin.

3. If you want to delete all the files in the Recycle Bin, you can choose File, Empty Recycle Bin.

*Note: Once a file is deleted from the Recycle Bin, it is permanently deleted and can no longer be restored.*

**Need to contact us?**

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