



# Inside Civic

The Customer Newsletter of Civic Systems

Fall 2005



## Civic Symposium a Resounding Success!

If you were one of the 150 Civic Systems customers who attended the Civic Symposium in early November, thank you, and we hope you had a wonderful, productive time! This year's event was held on November 2-3 at Madison's Marriott West. Every Civic employee was in attendance, and we enjoyed the opportunity to see so many of our valued customers in person.

This year's event had a Caribbean theme, as evidenced by these photos! After the first half-day of sessions, the group adjourned to the Marriott's Atrium for a customer reception. Entertainment was provided by Caribbean-style band OD TAPO IMI. It was fun and relaxing, and for a certain number of Civic employees and clients, marked only the *beginning* of an evening of festivities! Many islanders wandered over to the Cheeseburger in Paradise Grille in the Greenway Station Complex!



**Above:** Civic's newest employee, Mike Laesch, is seen here with Cindy Gosse and Marge Ellingson from Lake City, MN. The Caribbean theme was a lot of fun and a welcome diversion with cooler temperatures on the way to the Midwest! **Below:** Ellen Rodenkirch of North Fond du Lac enjoys some social time with Robbie Brinley and Wendy Kidwell of Niles, MI.

This year we taught 15 separate classes covering Timekeeping, Balancing Subsystems to the General Ledger, Hands-on Table Lists, Data Management, Utility Billing, Dashboard, Mass Unit Manager, Budgeting, Forms and Caselle's new Clarity product. Based on our customer feedback surveys, you found these classes useful and informative.

Copies of this year's PowerPoint Presentations and related materials are on our Customer Support Portal under the Downloads tab.

If you have not had an opportunity to check out the Customer Support Portal, give it a try. Just go to our homepage, Visit [www.civicsystems.com](http://www.civicsystems.com) and choose "Support Portal" on the left side of the page.



After entering the portal you can make a request for a new account. If you receive a message that your email is already in use, just enter your email address and click on "Forgot your password?" Any default password that may have been set up will be emailed to you. If you have any questions regarding the Support Portal or its use, contact [Dave Curley](mailto:dave.curley@civicsystems.com).

This is the quarterly customer newsletter of Civic Systems. You are receiving this because you are a client or friend of our company.

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We take your privacy very seriously. Read our [Privacy Policy](#) [here](#).

We treasure our relationship with you. We are proud that our strong software has contributed to your strong community!

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## Fraud: Could it Happen to Your Municipality or Utility?

Unfortunately, (or fortunately depending on how you look at it) one of the issues Virchow Krause, Civic's parent company, sometimes discovers during a financial audit is fraud. By covering some of the basics, we hope that you'll be able to better guard your municipality against this all-too-common problem.

### What is fraud?

Fraud is essentially a situation where we have an employee stealing money from his/her employer. An employee often rationalizes the behavior by thinking that the employer "owes them" or that "everyone does it." Some perpetrators, when caught, say they were intending to pay the company back at a later time. No matter what the rationalization, the behavior is illegal and punishable in a court of law. Fraud casts a long shadow on the municipality where it occurs, so you should do everything you can to prevent this type of financial loss and embarrassment.



### Who commits fraud?

Any one employee could be stealing from your municipality or utility. Male or female, young, middle-aged or elderly, a person of any race, educated or not, outgoing or not, low-income, middle income or high income. There are no deciding demographic factors at play, however we have noticed one common lifestyle factor which seems to serve as motivation: unbearable financial pressure. People define "unbearable" differently. To some, being on the edge of bankruptcy is unbearable, to others it may be unbearable to drive last year's car.

### Are we likely to have this problem?

If you have "loose" internal controls, you may be an easy target for fraud. Also, if the management in your municipality are setting a bad example, employees will often replicate their behavior, rationalizing that "If they're doing it, so can I."

### What signs should I be looking for?

Take employee tips seriously; if one of your employees reports questionable behavior on the part of another employee, it may be true. Perpetrators of fraud are notoriously nervous around auditors or those checking their work, and then become arrogant or defensive when questioned about their financial record keeping. When questioned, they often provide inconsistent and unfounded explanations for the financial records being examined.

### What can we do to safeguard our municipality/utility?

The number one thing you can do to protect against fraud is to increase the *segregation of duties*. This means that no one individual handles an entire transaction from beginning to end. By involving several people in a financial process, internal controls are in place to prevent both mistakes and abuse. We understand that in smaller organizations complete segregation is not possible, but there is always room for improvement in the segregation or the amount of review and oversight of the financial processes. If you need help determining how your municipality can start and enforce improved segregation of duties, [Jodi Dobson](#) would be happy to talk with you, or share a free PowerPoint presentation on the topic!

## The New Caselle® Clarity Suite



One of the most exciting topics at this year's symposium was the new Caselle Clarity Suite. Caselle has taken all of the great software applications you've come to rely on and improved them. The new Clarity Suite operates on the powerful, flexibly Microsoft SQL database, features more robust security, and a more intuitive graphical user interface.

The new Clarity product allows you to track access and changes to your data, which means you can see what was changed, when, and by whom. You can also restrict access to the field level for any application.

The new Clarity screen design features a task-based menu and a higher screen resolution allowing you to see more information at one time. You can also attach files to any application, storing those files any way you prefer-- by customer, employee and so forth. The new product also gives you the flexibility to display report data in a wider variety of formats.

Upgrades to the Clarity product will begin in Spring 2006. Customers who have recently signed contracts will be grandfathered to the SQL platform. For those others who wish to move to the SQL product, there will be a period of time when you can upgrade at 50% off. If you would like to see the new product in person, please contact your software consultant, [Sam Blahnik](#) or [Mike Laesch](#). They will be happy to demonstrate the product through a remote computer connection, or at your office—whichever is most convenient for you.

## Balancing the Utility Cash Clearing Account By Doug, McDermid, Support Analyst

At the end of every month, before the billing period is closed (if possible), the Utility Cash Clearing (UCC) account should **ALWAYS** have a zero balance. If it does not balance to zero after the Utility Billing and Cash Receipting have been updated to the General Ledger, follow these steps to determine to issue.

### 1) Print Reports

- a) Cash Receipting - Print a "Receipts Register by Date" report for the month.
  - Change the dates to the beginning and end of the month
  - On the Options tab, select only "Utility Payments" in the category section
- b) Utility Billing – Print a "Transactions Register" report for the month for payments only by day.
  - Change the report dates to the beginning and ending of the month (billing period does NOT matter for this issue)
  - Select "Payments" and "Payment Adjustments" only
  - In Report Order, make "Transaction Date" the primary report item and set the Total column to "Yes"

### 2) Verify the Totals on the Reports

- a) Compare the ending totals from each report to verify that they equal. If:
  - The Cash Receipting report is greater than the Utility Billing report, print an "Un-updated Payments" report from Cash Receipting and update any missed dates to Utility Billing.
  - The Utility Billing is greater than Cash Receipting, compare the daily totals from the Cash Receipting report and the Utility Billing report. Each day should balance between the two reports.

### 3) Correct any Discrepancies

Correcting discrepancies may involve resolving a combination of issues. There are "usually" only two issues that will cause an out of balance in the UCC.

- a) The primary cause is from Billing Adjustments being corrected with Payment Adjustment and vice versa. The first report to print is a Transaction Register for Billing and Payment Adjustments from Utility Billing for the days that are out of balance. Review any adjustments and verify that they were supposed to be Billing or Payment adjustments. **HINT: *Payment adjustments should be used when too much or too little cash has been received. Billing adjustments should be used when the customer has been billed too much or too little.***
- b) Customer deposit refunds are the second cause for UCC discrepancies. When a customer terminates, their deposit should get applied to their final billing. This may result in a remaining balance due to the customer. That balance normally resides within a customer deposit (liability) account within the General Ledger. Previously, the Caselle System would leave the UCC account out of balance and the refund check would offset to the UCC and cash. Today, this process has changed. Refund checks need to be applied to the customer deposit (liability) account to relieve the outstanding deposit owed to customers.

## End the Paper Trail!

Do you get the feeling that the paper in your office gets to travel more than you do? It's true, organizations waste a lot of time, money and space shuffling paper documents around.

Civic Systems offers a convenient, affordable way to help manage the paper documents in your office, with Integrated Document Management (IDM). IDM is a software application which captures paper (and electronic) documents, and provides the storage, retrieval, security and archiving of those documents.

IDM allows efficient distribution and control over information, files and records throughout your organization. It simplifies your business procedures by automating repetitive procedures, encouraging timely, collaborative action on information, and offering enhanced security for your records.

IDM makes it possible for your organization to:

- Manage thousands of documents, retrieving the correct one in seconds
- Share documents with colleagues while protecting confidential information
- Email and fax documents instantly
- Access documents away from the office
- Manage disaster recovery and business continuation
- Archive and destroy files based on pre-set timetables
- Enjoy increased workflow efficiencies

Call us today to request more information about IDM, and to see this powerful software tool for yourself!

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## Welcome to Our New Civic Systems Customers!

Bushnell, IL  
Dowagiac, MI  
Hibbing Public Utilities, MN  
Marshall, MI  
North Park Sanitary District, IL  
Two Rivers, WI  
Worthington Public Utilities, MN

### Employee Spotlight: Mike Laesch

Meet Civic's newest software consultant, Mike Laesch. Mike has roots in the state of Iowa, having attended Junior College in Des Moines, and Iowa State University in Ames. Like another Civic software consultant, Sam Blahnik, Mike has significant baseball experience—in fact the two of them played together at Iowa State. Mike went on to play in the Cincinnati Red's farm league as a pitcher. After a shoulder injury shortened his baseball career, Mike decided to go into sales.

Mike first worked for Ameriquest Mortgage, where he helped applicants realize the American dream of home ownership. This work was rewarding, but Mike jumped at the chance to join Civic when he heard we were looking for a software consultant for the states of Iowa and Minnesota. He now lives in Dodgeville, Wisconsin with his wife Sara and their Puggle (this pooch is a cross between a pug and a beagle) named Shea. Yes, Shea is named after the baseball stadium.



Mike was born in Jefferson, Wisconsin and has since lived in many states due to his baseball career. In addition to playing baseball, he also enjoys golf, fishing and watching basketball and football.

Mike has really enjoyed his first months at Civic. "Instead of *selling* something to people like I did at Ameriquest, I feel like I am *helping* people. They actually want to talk to me when I call. So far, no one has hung up on me!"

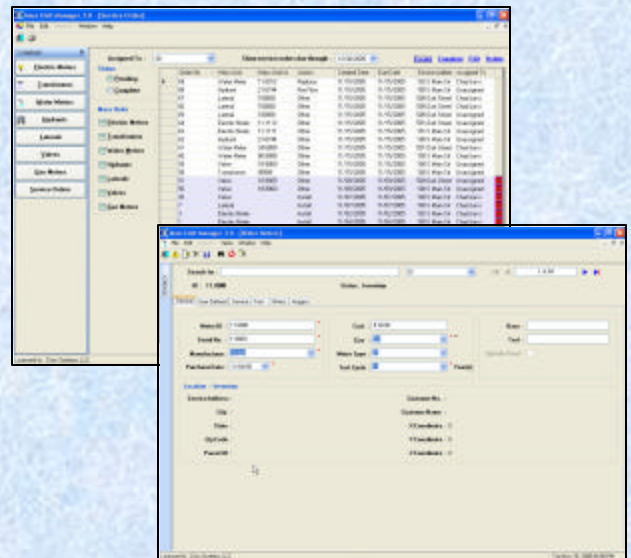
Mike, welcome to the Civic family, we are glad you're here! Mike can be reached at [mLaesch@civicsystems.com](mailto:mLaesch@civicsystems.com) or at 608.240.2389.

### MUM's the Word!

If you need help managing your utility's information, consider Civic's **Mass Unit Manager**. This powerful property management software helps you manage information related to your water, electric and gas infrastructure, including service orders. You can track a unit's precise location, make, model, cost and entire service history—all in a matter of seconds! The Mass Unit Manager maintains information on:

- Water Meters
- Hydrants
- Valves
- Backflow (available Summer 2006)
- Electric meters
- Transformers
- Laterals
- Gas meters
- Service orders

The Mass Unit Manager has been redesigned on a VB.NET platform, making it easier to find the information you are looking for and improving its reporting capabilities.



You can generate reports that include any combination of details such as a report of meters to be tested next week, or the last time a lateral was repaired. You can determine what information is included, and the format of the report. You can create user-defined queries making it easy to access repetitive information.

This simple software installs in a matter of minutes, and the clear, intuitive user interface is easy to understand and navigate. What's more, you pay for only the modules you need.

Contact your software consultant, [Sam Blahnik](#) or [Mike Laesch](#) today, to find out more about Civic's Mass Unit Manager and how this property management tool can help your utility save time and money.