



This is the quarterly customer newsletter of Civic Systems.

You are receiving this because you are a friend of our company.

If you'd rather not receive this newsletter, please accept our apologies and [reply](#) to this email with REMOVE in the subject line.

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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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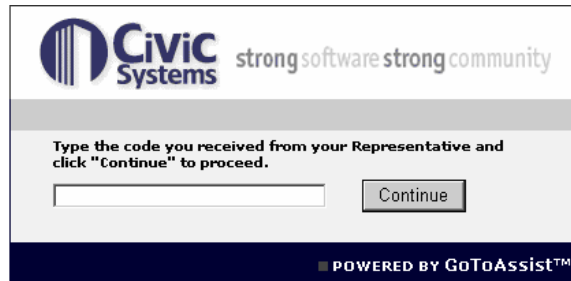
## Civic Systems Implements “GoToAssist”

Serving our customers in a timely manner is a priority here at Civic Systems, and we are always looking for ways to improve our level of efficiency. Sometimes it is necessary for our analysts to connect remotely to a customer’s computer to take care of their needs. In the past we have accomplished this with a variety of tools, some of which are still available. However, in an effort to make this process as easy as possible, we recently began using “GoToAssist”. This Citrix™ Product, similar to “GoToMyPC”, makes connecting remotely easy and quick.

If solving your issue requires a remote connection, our analyst will direct you to the Civic Systems website, [www.civicsystems.com](http://www.civicsystems.com). You can bookmark our website as a favorite for future reference.

From the homepage you will be asked to click on the “Support” link which will take you to a page that gives you information on how to get support. This page features helpful links to the [Support Portal](#), [Support Email](#) and finally, [Connecting Remotely to your PC](#).

Choosing this last link, [Remote Connection to Your PC](#), directs you to a screen which looks like this:



Your Civic Systems analyst will provide you with a 7-digit secure code to enter. Click “Continue” and the remote connection will be initiated. After following a few easy prompts, our staff will be ready to serve you.

If you are interested in learning more about how remote connections work, click [here](#).

## Welcome New Customers!

We want to extend a hearty welcome to the customers who have recently joined the Civic Systems family!

Central City, IA  
Otsego, MN  
Suamico, WI  
Waterloo Utilities, WI

## Hats Off to Linda Shannon!

Linda Shannon, City Clerk of the City of Auburn Hills, Michigan was recently honored as “City Clerk of the Year” by the Michigan Association of Municipal Clerks. Congratulations!

# Save the Date: The 2006 Civic Symposium

Mark your Calendars for November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>!

The Civic Systems Annual Customer Symposium will once again be held at the Marriott Hotel in Madison, Wisconsin on November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. Based on last year's participation and customer feedback, we will be increasing the length of the training sessions and offering some advanced training for some modules. We have also increased the classroom size to facilitate more participation at each session.

More details will be sent out in the very near future!

## Solution Spotlight: Meter Manager Plus



You can manage your utility's meters, laterals, hydrants, valves and transformers with accuracy, speed and ease. Our software simplifies mass unit tracking and eliminates duplicate records and files. With its easy-to-use functionality, you'll be amazed at how quickly you can find the information you need to create useful reports. Backflow management will be coming soon, so be sure to ask your software consultant for more details.

### Meter Manager Plus Provides Real Benefits!

- Quick entry of meter testing results.
- Provides the ability to find a unit's precise location, make, model, cost and entire service history in a matter of seconds.
- Incorporates key unit details and photos all on one screen.
- Has the ability to interface to mapping systems to instantly map a unit's location with the touch of a button.
- Contains test, service and master information on one screen.
- Allows combination of details, such as a report of meters to be tested next week or the last date a lateral was repaired.
- Provides alerts, such as meters overdue for testing.

If you need assistance managing your utility's mass units, [contact us](#) for more information on Meter Manager Plus.

## 2006 Events: Civic on the Road

9/17-20	MI Assn of Govtl Computer Users	Thompsonville, MI
9/19-22	SIRE Technologies Roundtable	Park City, UT
9/20-22	MI Municipal League Annual Conf	Alexandria, MN
9/21-22	WI Municipal Treasurers Assn	Stevens Point, WI
9/27	IA League of Cities	Coralville, IA
9/28-10/1	IL Municipal League	Chicago, IL
10/9-10/10	IA Rural Water Assn	Dubuque, IA
10/11	Municipal Clerks of IL	Springfield, IL
10/18	IA Municipal Finance Officers Assn	Des Moines, IA
10/18-19	Caselle User Conference	Las Vegas, NV
11/1-2	Civic Systems Symposium	Madison, WI

# Look Mom, No Paper!



SIRE Technologies, our partner for Integrated Document Management (IDM) solutions, has recently released Version 4.1 of its product suite. This new release features even greater functionality, allowing more efficient distribution and control over information, files and records throughout your organization. IDM simplifies your business procedures by (1) automating repetitive procedures, (2) encouraging timely, collaborative action on information, and (3) offering improved security for your records.

Version 4.1 includes many exciting new features including:

- Enhanced security measures and controls
- Web-based document management with the push of a button
- An offsite server hosting option, saving you the cost of servers and databases
- Agenda Plus integration with video streaming on the Internet
- Powerful FileCenter searches including annotations
- Enhanced form creation to accommodate multiple pages and previewing
- More effective document capture
- Over 250 file formats supported in the SIRE.NET viewer
- Automated archiving and retention of documents
- Easier Internet access with an improved WebCenter
- Workflow Module which supports Visio™ 2003

For as little as \$7,000, your organization can be well on its way to integrated document management. This introductory special offer for existing Civic Systems clients includes a scanning station, a five-user license and 2 days of onsite training for your team. In no time, you'll be turning your workplace into a paperless office.

Civic Systems is committed to your success, and has been for over 20 years. Contact Chuck Coopman today to request more information about Integrated Document Management and Agenda Management, and to see these powerful software tools for yourself!

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## Employee Spotlight: Chuck Coopman



Lucy, Chuck's yellow lab.

Chuck Coopman joined Civic Systems in December 2004 as a Software Consultant with emphasis on Integrated Document Management and Agenda Management solutions. Early in his career, Chuck worked as a land surveyor for 12 years. In that profession he became familiar with CAD software, and developed an interest in software sales and service.

Chuck is the father of four, and spends a great deal of time supporting his kids in their athletic endeavors. He enjoys hunting, fishing, hiking and reading, and still manages to go on 3 mile runs to stay in shape. Chuck and his family have recently welcomed Lucy, a 3-month old yellow lab who Chuck hopes to take hunting this coming Fall.

When I asked Chuck what he enjoys about working for Civic, he said "I really enjoy client visits. I like learning about their work environment and helping to identify technology that could improve their processes. I appreciate my clients' unwavering commitment to government and duty. I enjoy my role in providing better service to each government entity we serve."

## Helpful Tip of the Month: Defragging Your Hard Drive



*Is your computer running slow? Is it locking-up on you? Are programs suddenly terminating? If so, it might be time to consider defragging your hard drive.*

When you "defrag" your hard drive, a disk defragmenter program runs to optimize the placement of files on your hard drive. In simple terms here's what happens: as you use your computer, it writes information to the first available spot on your hard drive. Over a period of time, files tend to get rearranged on your hard drive, or fragmented. As an example, when trying to run or load a program, your computer may have to grab one file from the middle of the hard drive, one towards the outside and then back to the inside. The net result is that you computer runs more slowly.

Running a defragmenter program puts the files closer together, organizing them in similar groups. The end result is that your computer runs faster. We recommend that you perform this process every 2-3 months as part of your routine computer maintenance program.

**Important: Unless you are familiar with this process we recommend that you consult your IT staff for guidance before moving forward on your own.**

One of our customers recently reported to us that defragging their server produced *significant* gains in performance. We cannot promise you that this will always be the case, but it may be worth considering if you do not already do this on a regular basis.

## Training: Get the Most from Your Civic Systems Software

Do you need software training for new employees or just some refresher training? Do you want to increase productivity and learn how to more effectively use our software?

We offer a wide variety of educational opportunities perfect for your situation, whether you choose to come here to our state-of-the-art training facilities here in Madison, or whether you'd like us to train onsite at your location. [Contact us](#) to discuss your training needs, we are happy to help!

## Understanding the Taxability of Employee Reimbursements

Many municipalities and utilities are facing difficulty determining when certain reimbursements such as clothing allowances, meals, and vehicle usage are taxable to their employees. Reimbursements typically occur through two different methods: (1) a direct reimbursement, or (2) an accountable plan. Under the direct reimbursement method, an employee incurs an eligible expense and submits the receipt(s) to the employer for reimbursement. Under an accountable plan, the employer fronts an estimated amount of money for approved expenses and it is the employee's responsibility to account for the amount spent. The IRS has established several rules for accountable plans, which require the payee to:

1. Establish the business purpose and connection of the expenses.
2. Substantiate the expenses claimed to the payer within a reasonable period of time.
3. Return any amounts to the payer, which are over and above the substantiated business expenses within a reasonable period of time.
4. Report amounts which are over and above the substantiated business expenses, or not accounted-for within a reasonable period of time, are reportable to IRS on Form W-2 and subject to withholding of employment taxes (or are reportable on Form 1042-S and subject to section 1441 withholding, as applicable).

# Employee Reimbursements continued...



## ***When should the clothing you reimburse your employees for be taxable?***

The IRS has established a special list of rules regarding when clothing reimbursements are *not* taxable to employees because it is one of the more complex reimbursement issues:

1. The clothing must be specifically required as a condition of employment.
2. The clothing cannot be adaptable for general wear as ordinary clothing (typically clothing with a readily distinguishable logo or employer's name is not considered suitable for general wear).

For example, if a utility reimburses (or purchases) polo shirts for its employees which bear the employer's logo/name, this would not be taxable to the employees since the shirts contain a distinguishable logo on them. If utility linemen are required to have protective clothing as a condition of their employment and the clothing would not be appropriate to wear outside of the job environment, the clothing would not be taxable to the linemen.

If however, an employee is reimbursed for a *business* suit for a conference he/she is attending, this would be taxable to the employee since the suit could be used for other functions besides work.

## ***When should the meals you reimburse your employees for be taxable?***

If an employee is traveling for business and is required to stay overnight, the reimbursement is non-taxable. However, when the traveling is not overnight, the reimbursement is generally taxable to the employee unless substantial sleep is required before returning home.

For example, if a storm knocks down power lines in a city 75 miles away and the city requests some extra employees from you for the day (without spending the night) to help, and you agree to reimburse your employees for lunch if they help, that amount would be taxable to the employees, since "substantial sleep" would not be required before returning home.

In another example, a meal would not be taxable if a municipal utility manager pays for lunch while discussing business with potential suppliers and it is ordinary and necessary and the following occur:

1. The main purpose of the combined business and meal is the active conduct of business.
2. Business is actually conducted during the meal period.
3. There is more than the general expectation of deriving income or some other specific business benefit at some future time.

For example, if there is a training session for workers at an offsite location and lunch is provided, this would not be taxable because this is done for the convenience of the employer to ensure that everyone returns on time. This would also be the case if a meal was provided during a convention/conference because the meal time is typically considered an integral time to discuss business items in a less formal setting.



# Employee Reimbursements continued...



## ***When should the mileage you reimburse your employees for be taxable?***

If a personal vehicle is used for business purposes, the mileage reimbursement is not taxable to the employee. If a government employee uses a utility vehicle to commute from home to work on a regular basis (more than once per month), the use of the vehicle for the commute from work to home is taxable to the employee.

*Pursuant to the rules of professional conduct set forth in Circular 230, as promulgated by the United States Department of Treasury, nothing contained in this communication was intended to be written to be used by any taxpayer for the purpose of avoiding penalties that may be imposed on the taxpayer by the Internal Revenue Service, and it cannot be used by any taxpayer for such purpose. No one, without our express prior written permission, may use or refer to any tax advice in this communication in promoting, marketing or recommending a partnership or other entity, investment plan of arrangement to any other party.*

## Visit [CivicSystems.com](http://CivicSystems.com) Today!



We are very pleased to announce the arrival of our newly-designed website at [www.civicsystems.com](http://www.civicsystems.com)!

All of Civic Systems' products and services, including our new document and agenda management solutions, are described in a detailed but easy-to-read format. The site features some new sections which I hope you'll find helpful (Upcoming Events) if not a bit entertaining (Our People). I am also very happy that many of *you* are featured in this website (Fan Mail, Case Studies), and those are the pages we are most proud of!

As always, you may access our Customer Support Portal through the website via the Support tab at the top. Please visit the website, return often, and let us know what you think. This is one of several steps we are taking this year to further demonstrate that our strong software can contribute to your strong community.

