



CSC Connections

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 3

MARCH 2013



IN SUPPORT OF PARTNERSHIP

THIS MONTH

- *Where are the Cost Tables?*
- *More online backup options*
- *Condo Review Committee progress*
- *Certification reports available from DLS*

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As some CSC members already know, the Division of Local Services recently asked all municipal financial officers and those assessors in the FY 2013 certification cycle to respond to customer satisfaction surveys. The survey sent to financial officers asked them to rate their FY13 tax rate setting experience, while the survey sent to assessors focused on their FY13 certification experience. Responses could be sent anonymously, although a respectable number of officials chose to disclose their communities and/or identities.

DLS Deputy Commissioner Robert Nunes recently dis-



Survey Results

cussed the survey results with every DLS bureau and workgroup, with more discussion to follow at an all-DLS meeting in April. Survey results (with data that identified specific individuals removed) can be viewed here:

www.mass.gov/dor/local-officials/survey/survey.html

To better connect with and

serve our municipal partners, DLS has formed a Stakeholder Satisfaction Committee. More surveys are on the drawing board, as is a master DLS Stakeholder Bill of Rights, modeled on the DLS IT sections version released last summer (available here:)

www.mass.gov/dor/docs/dls/it/itstakeholderbillofrights.pdf

You'll hear more about this in coming days, but the bottom line is that all of us at DLS want to provide the best service possible. When you receive a survey invitation, please give us your honest opinion, good or bad. We're listening.

Kirsten Shirer, Editor

FY 2013 COST TABLES — UPDATE

For those of you wondering when the January 2013 cost tables will be available: DLS has received partial data from Marshall and Swift, and the conversion process is underway. We try to issue tables by the end of March each year, but this year we're facing a delay of probably 2 or 3 weeks. Marshall and Swift sent the new personal property and

commercial data, but shipped residential data from last year instead of 2013. Replacement data is on the way, and we're already converting the data we have (which still comes on paper, by the way—yes, really.) We'll email all CSC members when all 2013 tables are available. Until then, BLA will accept the use of

BlgJ Type	Table ID	Struc Code	Description	Crp Cde	RLC	FLC	Per SF	Adj. Factor	Lic. Fee	Depr Table ID
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R	ATT-GARAGE		ATTACHED GARAGE	2	3	2				
R	BASE-1HFF-BV		1.5-ST UPFRN BK VEN	1	3	Y	1.53			
R	BASE-1HFF-CN		1.5-ST UPFRN CONCRT	1	3	Y	1.53			
R	BASE-1HFF-SC		1.5-ST UPFRN STORD	1	3	Y	1.53			
R	BASE-1HFF-SS		1.5-ST UPFRN SODHG	1	3	Y	1.53			
R	BASE-1HFF-SV		1.5-ST UPFRN ST VEN	1	3	Y	1.53			

2012 tables in FY2014 certifications until the 2013 tables are ready for distribution.

ONLINE BACKUP—PART 2

What fits into a 50G space?

- 6,250,000 text only emails
- 7,500 photos
- 8,500 music files
- 1,000 videos
- approx. 34 copies of the Tolland Assessors' Oracle backup file

In last month's CSC Connections we re-introduced online backup. Continuing that discussion, this month we'll start introducing some of the current options available for backing up and securely storing data online.

Carbonite—www.carbonite.com

Carbonite advertises extensively, so you may have heard of this company. Discounts are often available through advertisements on Web sites, through email and in computer magazines. Available plans include:

Carbonite Home: 1 computer, unlimited space: \$59.99/year

Carbonite Business: Unlimited computers, 250G storage space: \$229/year

Carbonite's automated backup process skips both videos and files > 4G in size, but those can be backed up manually. You can try Carbonite free for 15 days.

Mozy—www.mozy.com

Mozy's Web site provides extensive infor-

mation that's easy to understand. Like Carbonite, Mozy has been around for quite a while and has a good track record. Unlike Carbonite, they offer a free account with a small amount of storage space. Plans include:

MozyHome:

Free account for 1 computer , 2G storage

1 computer with 50G storage \$5.99/month if paid monthly; pay annually to get 1 mo. free

1 computer, 125G storage is \$9.99/mo. paid monthly, with 1 month free if paid annually

Additional computers? Add \$2 per month per PC. Another \$2/mo. buys you an extra 20G storage. This sort of ala carte pricing is a little annoying, but it does let you tweak the package plans if they don't quite work for you.

Mozy supports both Windows and Mac, as well as providing mobile apps for iPhones and Android-based phones. When you update a file, Mozy stores old versions for only 30 days—some vendors save them forever.

Next month we'll look at two more options: SOSOnline Backup and Crashpad.

Dates to remember in April & May



FROM THE MUNICIPAL CALENDAR

April 1 Collector Mails 2nd Half Semi-Annual Tax Bills In communities using a regular semi-annual payment system, the 2nd half actual tax bill, or the actual tax if an optional preliminary bill was issued, should be mailed by this date.

April 1 Taxpayer Deadline for Payment of Semi-Annual Bill Without Interest This is the deadline for receipt of the actual tax payment in communities using the annual preliminary tax billing system on a semi-

annual basis, unless the bills were mailed after December 31. If mailed after December 31, payment is due May 1, or 30 days after the bills were mailed, whichever is later.

May 1 Taxpayer Deadline for Payment of Semi-Annual and 4th Qtr. Tax Bill Without Interest

This is the deadline for receipt of the 2nd half actual tax payment, or the actual tax payment if an optional preliminary bill was issued. This is also the deadline for the 4th Quarter tax payment.

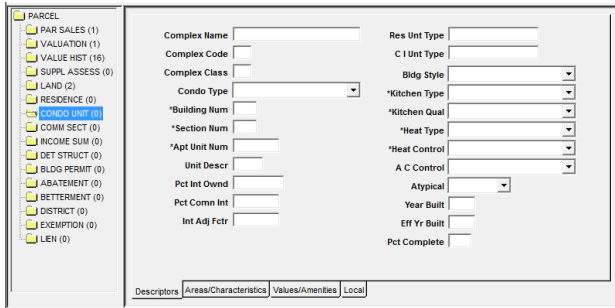
May 1 Treasurer Deadline for Payment of 2nd Half of County Tax

May 1 Accountant/Treasurer – Notification of Amount of Debt Due in Next Fiscal Year

May 15 Treasurer Submits 3rd Quarterly Reconciliation of Cash

May 15 DOR/BLA Commissioner Determines and Certifies Telephone and Telegraph Company Valuations

CSC CONDO REVIEW COMMITTEE



The Condo Review Committee formed at the last Annual Meeting has been working with DLS IT staff to identify the requirements for enhancing and revising the Real Property Information System (RPIS, or “DOR CAMA.”) These enhancements will not only address BLA’s new certification requirements concerning condos, but will also make it easier for CSC communities with large complexes to collect and maintain condo complex and unit data.

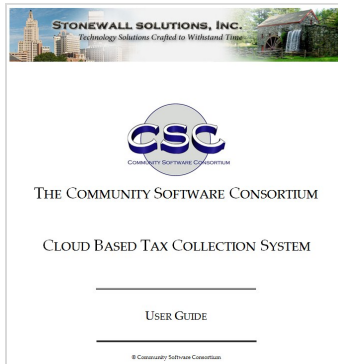
The committee met in March to discuss potential improvements. A draft plan has been developed and will be discussed when the committee meets again on March 28th. Once the requirements document has been finalized (probably in early April), DLS will approach Thomson Reuters to obtain a quote for the necessary program changes. Details including timeframe will be forthcoming, but the general plan is to have the condo enhancements completed for the FY 2015 certification cycle. Questions or suggestions for the committee? Contact any member: Garret Boles/North Andover, Paul Cibelli/Southborough, Joan Navarro/Uxbridge, Jennifer O’Neil/Grafton, Theo Gabriel/Seekonk, Chip Davis/Needham, Dan Brogie/Northborough. Need help dealing with the requirements in FY 2014? Give DLS IT a call and we’ll work with you.

2013 CIC GRANT PROJECTS — NO FUNDING THIS ROUND, BUT MOVING AHEAD REGARDLESS

As you probably know, CSC member towns Royalston and Washington, in partnership with the CSC, applied for two more Community Innovation Challenge Grants: one to fund beta testing of the Cloud system (development of which was funded by a 2012 grant) and a second to add a municipal accounting program to the Cloud application suite. Budget cuts slashed the CIC grant pool in half, and when the 2013 awards were announced in February, unfortunately the CSC’s proposals weren’t on the list. (An additional round of grant awards may occur in the spring if full funding for the program is restored.)

Although this was disappointing, the CSC Board remains committed

to moving the CSC’s interests forward regardless of CIC grant funding. Beta testing of the Cloud system will pro-



ceed as planned, with eight communities (Royalston, East Brookfield, Williamstown, Holliston, Warwick, Washington, Framingham and Windsor) committed to testing various parts of the application suite. Several communities facing a looming hardware crisis may also join the beta test phase. (Please contact Kirsten Shirer

or Dave Davies at DLS, or Rebecca Krause-Hardie in Royalston if you’re in this situation.)

The CSC is in discussions with Stonewall Solutions Inc., its software vendor, to evaluate scaling back the municipal accounting system development plan. Providing Washington and other small towns with an affordable system is still very much on the table. In fact, the CSC is moving forward aggressively with plans to provide new, innovative and necessary services to its member communities. More details will follow in coming weeks; for now, the CSC Board of Directors welcomes comments and questions. Please contact Tammy Blackwell, CSC President (contact info on the back page) or Rebecca Krause-Hardie (tax@royalston-ma.gov).



Community Software Consortium

www.csc-ma.us

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The Community Software Consortium is a self-governing municipal organization consisting of 60+ Massachusetts communities. It was established in 1996 under M.G.L. 40, § 4A to give every member access to quality technology products and services at a reasonable cost, through the power of joint purchasing. In FY 2012, the CSC was awarded a \$290,700 Community Innovation Challenge Grant by the Commonwealth to fund migration of its property appraisal and tax administration software applications to The Cloud.

For more information about the Community Software Consortium, contact the current Chairman of the CSC Board of Directors:

Tammy Blackwell, Principal Assessor, Town of Sheffield
(413) 413-229-7001 Ext. 155

tblackwell@sheffieldma.gov

TECH TIPS: CERTIFICATION-RELATED REPORTS

Heading into a certification year? DLS IT has a number of certification-related reports, using both the IQ Objects and Business Objects reporting tools, that will make it easier to export and analyze your data.

Land Review Spreadsheet: this is now available both as an IQ report and also as a Business Objects report. We publish two versions of the report: one is used to export the raw data to a text file (for use in Excel) and another version produces the data with column headers. It's important to know that this report produces multiple lines per parcel—it prints every land record, so a parcel having 3 land records will appear in the report 3 times.

Residential Review Spreadsheet: like the Land Review report, this is available in the original IQ format

and now also in Business Objects. Because the report includes porch types, a parcel having more than one porch type (like both a deck and a front porch) will appear on multiple lines. If your BLA Advisor requests a single line per parcel version, removing the porch fields will accommodate that request. (Call us if you need help.)

Ratio Studies: all other analysis reports exist in Business Objects only. Thanks to DLS's Paul Corbett, many useful analysis reports are available:

- * Adj Land Residual Ratio Study
- * Adj Land Sale Ratio Study
- * Bldg Style Ratio Study
- * Condition Ratio Study
- * Effective Age Quartile Ratio Study
- * Finished Area Quartile Ratio Study
- * Grade Ratio Study
- * Income Land Residual Ratio Study

- * Land Area Quartile Ratio Study
- * Land Residual Nbhd Ratio Study
- * Land Residual Ratio Study
- * Land Sale Ratio Study
- * Land Size Quartile Ratio Study
- * Neighborhood Ratio Study
- * Overall 101 Adj Sale Ratio Study
- * Overall 101 Ratio Study
- * Overall 102 Ratio Study
- * Sale Date Quartile Ratio Study
- * Sale Price Quartile Ratio Study
- * Story Height Ratio Study
- * Year Built Quartile Ratio Study

All of these come in two versions: one using final values and one using Cost values. If you're missing a report, all certification-related reports are available for download from the CSC Web site.

We recommend keeping all certification-related reports in their own folder for easy access. It's also good practice to keep copies of the original reports separate from your working copies; ask your IT Advisor or IT Support for help in setting this up.