VANGUARD APPRAISALS, INC.

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Excellence achieved through people, products and service.™

News for friends of Vanguard

Notes from the Trenches
CAMAvision Rewrite Progress Report
by Nick Klein

Finally, after almost 3 years in development, we are testing and preparing CAMA-X for release. It has been a huge undertaking. The question I would like to ask you, **"Are you ready?"** More specifically, are your computers and existing CAMAvision data ready?

For some time now I have said that a pre-conversion test program will be made available to test your hardware and data before CAMA-X is final. The *CAMAvision Upgrade Advisor*, as it's being called, will be made available toward the end of August 2004. It will be provided as a separate CD-ROM with the upcoming CAMAvision 8.0 release and as a download from our website. VCS NetNews will be first to tell you where it can be downloaded and I also hope to have a postcard mailing.

CAMAvision Upgrade Advisor can be used on any machine currently running CAMAvision or any machine you plan to install with CAMAvision. It checks for operating system compatibility (CAMA-X will only run on Windows 2000/XP) and tests existing CAMAvision data to ensure the latest patches (i.e., "restructure" programs) have been applied. When CAMA-X becomes generally available, the *only* update path we want to provide is from CAMAvision 8 to CAMA-X. The overriding reason is for you to have zero value changes.

At the end of its processing, the Upgrade Advisor allows you to print the log files it creates. I highly recommend you print a copy. Next it wraps these into a single file and asks that you mail or email that file to Vanguard Appraisals. These are a few reasons we ask that you do this:

1. It gives us a copy of the data conversion logs for technical support reference. In the event you have questions or call for assistance in data cleanup, it will make the work that much easier.
2. It updates our records with a new NSysEdit (Computer Info) report. This is useful for technical support and custom programming requests. Note: The same report generated from CAMAvision Utilities > Computer Info section.
3. Custom Query Wizard queries (from the VCSEtc directory) will be gathered for testing to ensure they update to the new table layouts. Contact us directly if you have concerns about custom "must have" queries.

For additional information on hardware, networking and operating system requirements, I recommend you check out the CAMAvision Hardware Specifications document downloadable from www.camavision.com.

I encourage everyone to attend the VCS User Group Meetings this fall in your respective areas. We will be showing off CAMA-X and allow you a hands-on look at the next generation of CAMAvision. Hope to see you there!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The User Group Meeting You Don't Want to Miss!!!

Online Registration and additional information
Available at www.camavision.com

The time has finally arrived. The new version of CAMAvision, CAMA-X, is ready for release. The Vanguard team has been working long and hard for 3 years to bring you this latest version of our flag ship product. Come see all the new CAMA-X features: fresh new screen layouts, more reliable database, redesigned network features, PDF locking and designed to take advantage of today's technology. This is one user group meeting you will not want to miss. So please join us for the 6th Annual VCS User Group Meeting.

Some topics to be covered: Cama-X, Web-X, Exemption Module, Personal Property (Missouri Only) and Green Acres (Minnesota Only).

Missouri

Wednesday, October 13th and Thursday, October 14th
Holiday Inn Select-Executive Center
2200 1-70 Dr SW
Columbia, MO 65203
(573) 445-8531

Minnesota/North Dakota

Wednesday, October 20th and Thursday, October 21st
Holiday Inn
Intersection of Hwy 15 & 23
75 South 37th Ave.
St Cloud, MN 56302
(320) 253-9000

Iowa/Illinois

Tuesday, November 30th and Wednesday, December 1st
Collins Plaza Hotel
1200 Collins Rd. NE Cedar Rapids, IA
(319) 393-6600

VCS Personal Property: What's New
By: Scott Johnson

Here we are half way though 2004 and it doesn't seem possible that we should be thinking about next year and personal property. Most of you have printed the Assessment Book and Form 11 and are working on your BOE changes so that you can finish up your Form 11A totals.

Brad has been very busy with user submitted ideas and updates for the Personal Property program over the past year. We currently have 14 counties using or starting to use VCS Personal Property and more coming onboard every day.

Here are just a few of the major updates and new ideas that Brad has incorporated:

BOE Manager tracks all changes to current and added accounts for the Form 11A. It automatically tracks adds, deducts and items that are omitted. All you have to do is turn it on after you finish with your Form 11.

Live Update will transfer single account information to the Tax Administration software at the click of a button. NOTE: You will need to contact your tax software vendor to complete the connection.

The **New Query Wizard** is complete and fully operational as well as the Query Lite being used for detailed account searches such as accounts with zero values on individual items.

Adding a New Account automatically searches for the next available account number.

Mailing Labels with the Bar Code allows for printing of mailing labels for first and second mailings and incorporates the bar code directly on the label.

It is so important that we hear from you, *the user*, so please keep those ideas coming! Know of someone who might be interested in using the "Best Personal Property Program" out there? Please let me know by emailing me at scott@camavision.com or calling (641) 464-2416.

Remember: Keep smiling 😊 because help is only a phone call away.

Vanguard Tech Support: (319) 286-6451

Upcoming VCS Income Module
By: Dave Siefkas

I guess the word is out about the newest VCS module. The Income Approach module has been in the planning for several months and is coming along nicely. Although programming has not started, screen designs were demonstrated at the North Dakota assessor's conference the first week in August. While the Income Approach can seem complicated, even though it will be on the computer, it has been condensed into eight basic steps. From the development of the potential gross income to the calculation of the indicated value VCS will lead the user through each step and much of the process is automatic. The main responsibility of the user is to enter the data from the operating statements filed by the property owner. Not to over-simplify but the process is simple. Mail the property owner's income/expense statements, enter the data returned into VCS and let VCS do the rest.

The Income Approach module is scheduled for release in the spring of 2005, just in time for use for 2006 assessments. If you would be interested in testing a beta version of the software please contact Brad Miller at brad@camavision.com.

Pick-A-Note
By: Brad Miller

This feature allows the user to quickly add notes by choosing from a predefined list. Due to time constraints, these notes are not in a pricing table which can be edited by the user. However, the plan is to add them into a table that user's may edit in the CAMA-X release.

Notes may be added in the following ways:
   1) If you know the number of the note you want to add, simply type it in the "Specific Selection" field. You may select up to 5 note entries.
   2) Use the mouse and click the check boxes of the items you want added.

The "Note Information" section:
   1) Quickly choose one of the 3 note positions where you want the note to go: Position 1,2, or 3. The position defaults to the note the cursor is in when the Pick-A-Note button is clicked.
   2) Provides a preview of the note.
   3) The preview can be edited with specific changes you want to make.
   HINT: Select all the predefined notes you want before editing the preview, because the note preview is cleared and repopulated after every selection made. This is done so that selections can be quickly checked and unchecked. Therefore, any changes you specifically make before clicking the "Ok" button will be lost after making another selection.   However, once the "Ok" button is clicked the changes are made permanent and can not be lost by going back into the Pick-A-Note and making another selection.

How it works:
   1) Each time a note is picked, the note preview is redisplayed, showing the notes in order as they appear in the list.
   2) When the "Pick-A-Note" button is clicked, all pre-existing note information will be automatically placed into the note preview area.
   3) To easily clear the note, simply click the "Clear" Button.
   4) Changes are not saved back to the parcel until you click the "Ok" button.
   5) The "Cancel" button cancels any changes you may have made.
   6) Should you edit a predefined note in the Note Preview area, click the "Keep" button. This way, your changes will be kept should you choose another predefined note before clicking the "Ok" button .
   7) This screen can be resized using the mouse and is automatically saved. Therefore, for those users using a computer resolution of 800x600 or higher you can resize the screen to see more of the 41 items in the predefined list.
   8) A single note may consist of 250 characters. Any excess characters beyond 250 will not be retained in the note. *HINT*:   A counter of how many characters used is supplied in the bottom status bar. A warning message will appear should the number of characters exceed 250.

Archive CD
By: Kara Leyse

Are you ready to have your data archived? Whether you are having the data processed for the first time or a subsequent time, here are the steps to follow.

Once you have finished with entries and will not be making changes, contact Teresa teresa@camavision.com or Kara kara@camavison.com at the Cedar Rapids office (319) 365-8625 so the contracts may be generated. Archive charges are based on the number of reports processed so please have the following information available:

* Type of parcels to be processed, working or certified?

* Number of parcels to be processed?

This count may be found by selecting the Utilities Main Menu option and then the Computer Info tab and button in CAMAvision. A report will be automatically generated which lists the pdf(s) and the number of parcels in each pdf. NOTE: Please keep in mind that your data is pulled by parcel data file (pdf). What does this mean to you? An entire pdf will be archived **not** a portion of the pdf. Example: you would like to archive the Ag Dwellings but not the Ag Land parcels and they are both in the same pdf. You will need to move one set of data to another pdf in order to not have the Ag Land included in the archive process. Once the parcels are separated the Ag Land would be in its own pdf and could be excluded from the archive process.

* Which report(s) format for the archived parcels? (IE: Property Record Card, Parcel Summary)

After we have the information needed to generate your contract, we will have you talk to Jenny so she can make sure you are correctly set up to send your data. Once the data is received it will be processed and before long we will mail you the Archive CD with your selected records.

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Ready for House Bill HF2544?
By: Jenny Shanahan and Andy Colson

In the interest of state-wide unique parcel numbers, the state has issued bill HF2544, which, more or less says you need to add your county number to the start of your parcel pin.

That, of course, is easier said than done. If you use the mainframe transfer with VCS you'll need to change both of them at the same time. The good news is, on the VCS side, the pin switch is easy and ready to go. We have developed a small program that can be run at your site that adds the county number to the front of your parcel pin.

* You will first need to run a verify in CAMAvision and if you have any errors call tech support at (319) 286-6451.
* You will then need to have a good backup of your CAMAvision data before starting the pin switch process.
* We will also need to discuss how you want your new parcel mask to look. If your current mask is 000-000-000. You may want your new mask to be: 00-000-000-000, or 00.000-000-000, or even 00000-000-000. Its your choice. Just remember, if you're using the mainframe transfer, you'll need to be sure the changes are compatible.

The price? About $300. Time is estimated at a four hour charge, which includes our development time, planning time, connection fees, run time, and Andy's new summer house in the Keys.

Please contact Jenny jenny @camavision.com at the Cedar Rapids office (319) 365-8625 when you're ready to switch and we will dial-in to run the program.

New Exemption Module
By: Brad Miller

As you may have heard we are currently working on an Exemption Module that will aid assessors in tracking all of their exemptions. In fact, we think it is important enough to add into the current CAMAvision V8.00. That's right, there is going to be a CAMAvision version 8.00 and it is scheduled for release in Fall 2004.

The planning for this new module has been in the works for some time now. A meeting was recently held by the Iowa VCS Assessor's Committee in Story County, where the programming requirements were finalized. All in attendance agreed that this module should prove to be a great help in tracking and maintaining property exemptions. Also, we agreed that this is a great start to the module with future enhancements to come. Vanguard will be working as closely as possible with all Tax Administration vendors so the exemption information will be transferred smoothly and reliably.

Now, I know budgets are tight and everyone could use a little helping hand, so we would like to extend a special offer. *From now through December 31st, 2004 this module will be priced with a $500 license fee and $250 per year service agreement.* Starting January 1st, 2005 the license price goes up to $1000. So buying it now is like getting the license and 2 years of service for the price of the module license after December. Those who purchase this module for the current CAMAvision will be upgraded with the CAMA-X version at no additional cost.

There is nothing special you have to do in order to save $500. At anytime before December 31, 2004, contact Kara at kara@camavision.com or at the home office (319) 365-8625 and request the Exemptions Module.

IMPORTANT DATES
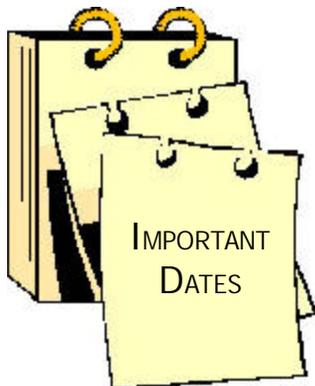
On-line registration and additional information always available at
www.camavision.com

**See the list of
VCS User Group Meetings
on Page 2 of this issue!**

**Missouri Assessors
Conference**
Chateau on the Lake
(417) 334-1161
Branson, MO
September 7-10, 2004

**M.A.A.O.
Fall Conference**
Holiday Inn
Duluth, MN
September 19-22, 2004

**I.S.A.A.
Fall School and Conference**
West Des Moines Marriott
West Des Moines, IA
October 3-6, 2004

**I.S.A.C.
Fall School of Instruction**
West Des Moines Marriott
West Des Moines, IA
November 14-16, 2004