Vanguard Appraisals, Inc.

Excellence achieved through people, products, and service. ™

Winter 2013

Special points of interest:

- Which Slate is Right for You
- Thoughts from Andy
- User Group Meeting Winners
- Employee Advancements

Inside this issue:

News For friends of Vanguard

The Windows XP End of Life Countdown

By Nick Klein

The countdown officially began on April 8th, 2013. One year from that date, Microsoft will stop issuing updates, security patches, and support for Windows XP and Office 2003. You can read more about it at their website: http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/endofsupport.aspx. There is even "countdown" style websites and gadgets for your computer to count down to the end (check out http://countingdownto.com/countdown/62361).

Naturally Windows XP will not stop working once April 8th rolls around, and according to Net Applications (http://www.netmarketshare.com/), the XP market share is still around 30% worldwide. Its only recently been dropping because of the release of Windows 8.x. Our own usage statistics show that XP is second only to Windows 7 for users of CAMAvision.

If it's not broken, why fix it, right? XP has been around for nearly 12 years and is pretty solid. In those years there have been many advances in technology and software, much of it good, but some of it… not so good. Security of our data is more important than ever and who knows what "zero-day" hack or exploit might be discovered. Another consideration is that new peripherals, such as printers, may not support the aging operating system.

Should you have an older computer that is never connected to the Internet, has up-to-date anti-virus running and has all the security updates, then you are probably OK for a while. On the other hand, if you aren't sure about the older computers in your office then you will definitely want to talk to your IT department. Vanguard will do it's best to support CAMAvision running on XP, but will urge clients to plan for upgrades sooner, rather than later.

Microsoft has recently rolled out Windows 8.1, an update to Windows 8 that addresses many user complaints from the initial release. Hardware manufacturers have released new products with reduced power consumption without sacrificing speed, and computer vendors are rolling out new laptops all the time. The overall desktop (and laptop) PC market is in a slight downturn at the moment, so I would expect Dell, HP, and other vendors to have pretty good deals.

Back in 2010 I wrote an article about support ending for Windows XP Service Pack 2 (SP2). At that time 2014 was a long way off so I suggested making sure your software was up to date but to start thinking longer term about replacement. If you have *any* Windows XP computers, now would be good time assess your computer situation and plan for the future. You can also call our technical support line to get ideas for hardware replacement.

Which Slate is Right for You?

By: Marty Barrett

New hardware is coming out all the time, and everyone has their own personal needs and preferences. Do you want the fastest tablet? Or would you prefer the lightest or thinnest tablet? Do you want a device that can do everything? How do you determine what to buy? I have listed some important considerations when purchasing a tablet for CAMAvision Remote.

Remember that buying a tablet is just like buying a car. No one can tell you which car you will like best. It comes down to how you use it. If you need to pull a trailer every weekend, you shouldn't buy a sporty 2 door coupe. Similarly, if you're going to be using Pictometry and ArcGIS on your tablet, you should buy one with a little more horse power.

Just like a car, everyone should try out their tablet before they buy it. If you have the opportunity, go to a store that sells computers, and get your hands on some of them to see what works best for you.

Considerations:

- Operating System
  - Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8, 8.1

- Weight
  - 2 lbs. is the heaviest
  - Lighter is always better

- Screen size
  - Minimum 10"

- Resolution
  - Minimum 1366 x 768

- Battery life
  - Some tablets offer all day battery life

- Pen support
  - Recommended Note: A device that does not have active pen support cannot use a pen if you purchase one after the fact. There is a layer within the screen that is necessary to make this function

- Storage
  - 64 GB +

- Memory
  - Min 2GB; 4GB recommended

- Processor
  - Minimum Atom; Haswell (4th Gen Core Series) i3, i5, i7 Recommended

- Price
  - -Varies from $349 all the way up to Thousands
  - -You get what you pay for: don't expect a $400 tablet to perform like a super computer

Some Options:

Asus Transformer Book T100

Pros:

    Lightweight

    Low Price

    New Atom Processor

Cons:

    No Pen

    Not as fast as Haswell

Microsoft Surface Pro 2

Pros:

    Pen Support

    New Haswell Processor

    Smart Covers

Cons:

    Heavy for its size

Lenovo ThinkPad Helix

Pros:
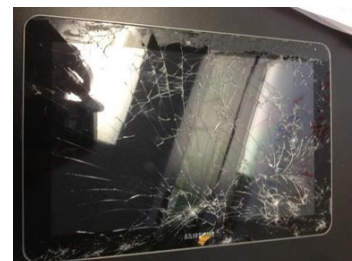
    Lightweight

    Pen Support

    Docks into full laptop functionality

    Keyboard holds additional battery

Cons:

    Last generation processor

    Pricey

Be protective with your equipment

Back to Index

Thoughts from Andy

By: Andy Colson

I was playing around with the payroll database the other day and it occurred to me that there might be some interesting stats in there.

It actually took us a while to get the entire company onto electronic payroll. The VCS Department started first. One of the first payroll entries I have is on Dec. 31, 1997 for Nick Klein, with the comment: "Begin to look at Comp Search for DOS."

We got the data entry staff (that work in the office) online in October 2000 and the rest of the VAI field staff followed in January 2009. So when I start summing up all the miles that we've driven understand that we don't have company wide data until 2009.

Q Since January 2009, what employee has the most miles?

A Lori Knox, with 164,520 miles. That's about 41,130 miles per year.

Q What is the circumference of the earth at the equator?

A Why that's about 24,901 miles. Which means Lori drives just over 1 and a half times around the earth every year. One might say that Lori is in *very* low earth orbit)

Q How far have all the VCS field representatives driven since 2009?

A 34 employees put in 1,238,171 miles.

Q How far have all the VAI Appraisers driven since 2009?

A 45 employees put in 2,026,261 miles.

As a company we have averaged 816K miles a year. Keeping in mind that it's only 239K miles to the moon, that means we have driven to the moon and back, 1.7 times!   How far will we go? To the moon and back!

Why Not Use the Computer ID Field?

By: Terri Scheuermann

There has been much discussion recently regarding the Commercial Property Tax Credit application and processing. We all know that the jurisdiction tax administration and GIS software will be primarily utilized for this new rule.

Since CAMAvision is the GOTO program and primarily used in the office for most functions how can CAMAvision be used also?

The Computer ID field on the General screen is a free form field and so could be used as a tool to note that an application has been received and approved.

You could possibly include the BPTC Unit ID # such as: 77-2013-0100-0002-0001 here.

An added benefit of using this field is that the Computer ID field is displayed in the heading of all the Parcel Detail reports printed from CAMAvision.

2014 Budgets

2014 is right around the corner. Do you need an estimated cost of your service renewal fees? If you are not on a consolidated service contract; would you be interested in having all of your module fees come due at the same time?

If so, please contact Kara at kara@camavision.com or Teresa at teresa@camavision.com or call 319-365-8625.

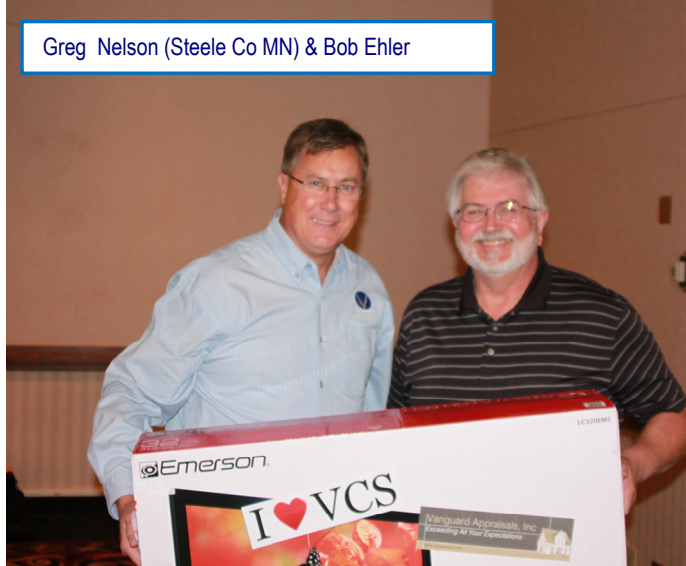# User Group TV Winners for 2013

Diane Hemmingsen (St Charles Twp. IL), Mike Weeks and Stan Moellers

Tonya Rasmussen (Lincoln Co SD) & Brad Miller

Sue Ettleman (Crawford Co IA)

Jay Stewart (Camden Co MO) & Brad Miller

Greg Nelson (Steele Co MN) & Bob Ehler

Kevin Ternes (City of Minot ND), Ryan Ehli and Lori Knox

Illinois

South Dakota

Missouri

Back to Index

Iowa

North Dakota

Minnesota
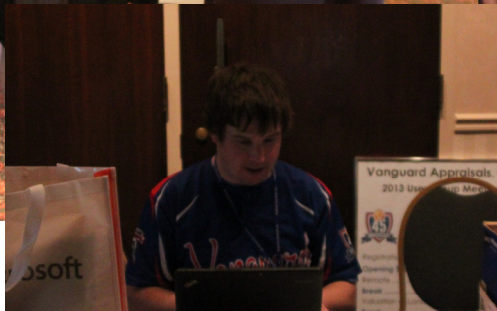
User Group Meeting Review

By: Teresa Ellerby

For 2013, we completed six successful user group meetings. We started with our first in Illinois at the Double Tree in Bloomington in April. We had a one day user group meeting with 20 attendees with ten different jurisdictions. Second meeting was at the Best Western Ramkota in Pierre South Dakota in July. We had 32 people each day, with a total of eleven different jurisdictions. Next was the Missouri meeting at a new location Stoney Creek Inn in Columbia. Day one was split sessions for Personal Property and Real Estate with 114 in attendance while day two was Real Estate only 59 attendees. We had 31 jurisdictions attend along with six State Tax Commission representatives. Our next user meeting was in Iowa in September at the Cedar Rapids Marriott in Cedar Rapids. We had 83 jurisdictions and three from the Department of Revenue, day one we had 198 attendees with 167 day two. Traveling for our final two meeting was in October. we started at the Comfort Inn in Bismarck North Dakota. We had 69 attendees both days with a total of 33 jurisdictions. We continued that week finishing the last meeting in Minnesota at the Ramada Inn in Bloomington. Day one we had 78 attendees and day two we had 69 attendees with a total of 15 jurisdictions.

Great attendance for all-Thank You for attending.

Future User Group Meeting Topics Mentioned from the Evaluations

Pricing in VCS
More time for enhancements/any new updates
Board of review, sketch review possible shortcuts.
Queries
Component pricing
Grading with a practice exercise, how to draw on sketch stuff out of normal like gazebo or angles
Version 19 and agricultural buildings
Multiple classed parcels in VCS

Comments On User Group Meeting
Thank you for all your good work thru the year.
Well organized.
More time for updates
Fun theme. Love the team uniform.
Excellent
Enjoyed the sessions-very informative.
For my first time it was very informative and fun-Thank You!
Great as always!
Good job, very beneficial, glad we use Vanguard
They are always very enjoyable and lots of fun. Also very knowledgeable
You guys do an amazing job. I really appreciate the work you put into this conference to help us learn.
Two days personal property and two days real estate
Very good topics as always

15 Year Clients

Davis County IA
Des Moines County IA
Montgomery County IA
Sioux County IA
St Charles Twp. IL
Daviess County MO
Gentry County MO
Harrison County MO
Lafayette County MO
Linn County MO
Mercer County MO
Putnam County MO
Ray County MO

Clients with 20+ years

Allamakee County IA	Floyd County IA	Plymouth County IA
Black Hawk County IA	Greene County IA	Poweshiek County IA
Bremer County IA	Grundy County IA	Sac County IA
Buchanan County IA	Hancock County IA	Sioux City IA
Buena Vista County IA	Hardin County IA	Story County IA
Butler County IA	Henry County IA	Tama County IA
Carroll County IA	Humboldt County IA	Union County IA
Cedar County IA	Jackson County IA	Warren County IA
Chickasaw County IA	Jefferson County IA	Washington County IA
Clay County IA	Keokuk County IA	Wayne County IA
Clinton City IA	Linn County IA	Webster County IA
Crawford County IA	Mahaska County IA	Winneshiek County IA
Davenport City IA	Marion County IA	Woodbury County IA
Dickinson County IA	Monroe County IA	Wright County IA
Emmet County IA	Muscatine County IA	Nobles County MN
Fayette County IA	O'Brien County IA	Rice County MN

2013 Conference Prize Winners

Mike Weeks, Kandie White from Lee County and Terri Scheuermann at ISAA (Iowa State Association of Assessors) conference October

Bob Ehler and Charles Kruse from Grundy County at ISAC (Iowa State Association of Counties) conference October

Back to Index

2014 Bumper Sticker Contest

Don't forget about your bumper sticker contest for the 2014 user group meeting on your holiday travels. Here's some examples of using the bumper stickers. Try to guess where Nick is at. This is your chance to win $500 off the module license of your choice or serviceplus time. All you need to do is take this VCS bumper sticker and have your photo taken in front something unique.
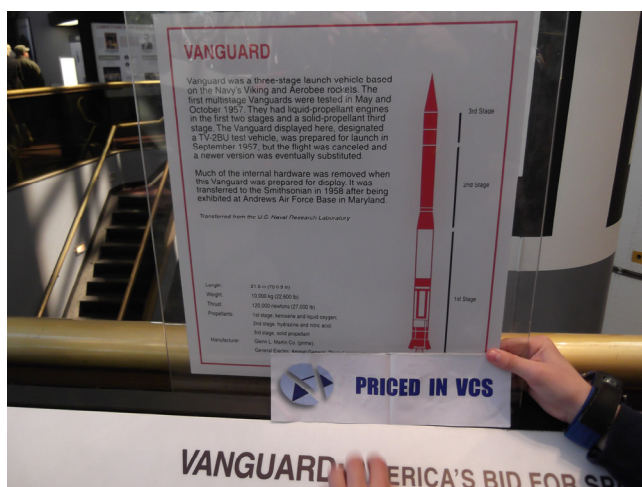
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Back to Index

Since 1968, Vanguard Appraisals has been at the forefront of the mass appraisal industry. Our trained staff includes specialists in field data collection, appraisal review, pricing, mass appraisal project management, court preparation and testimony, data entry, software engineering, technical support and training.

Our Flagship CAMAvision product has been developed specifically to operate in the assessor's environment. Vanguard is a full service company. We provide a wide range of appraisal products and services for assessors, we also see all the projects through completion.

Customer satisfaction is our main goal.

Scott Johnson
Vice president VCS Field Operations

Stan Moellers
Regional Manager

Joel Zitterich
Regional Field Specialist

Tammy Monson
Office Manager-Appraisal Division

Jane Russell
Employee Development & Staff Manager

Employee Advancements in 2013