



Keystone NEWS

December 31, 2006

Volume 2006, Number 4

WHAT IS THE WORD OF THE YEAR? BACKUP!

If you have been following Keystone Systems for some time, you may know that we normally use this column of our December newsletter to talk about our successes and highlight a few new features of our software.

We will have something to say about those things, but first, we need to cover something that has been at least mentioned in every newsletter for the last couple years: If you have not tested your ability to restore your backup, you may well be wasting your time and money with whatever process you have in place. Even the most sophisticated solution offered by an outside vendor may not actually work! Just this week, a client discovered that the backup routine their hardware vendor set up was not working. It was intended to take a "snapshot" of their data twice a day and save it on a removable hard drive in another computer. Seemed like a great idea until they discovered that it was only copying files that were not in use. Being a larger company with many employees, there were not many useful files that were getting captured. What was there did not comprise a complete set of data that could be restored to put them back in service.

We recommend burning your data to CD-R daily. This is easy to do and you can rotate recent copies off-site. There was a very complete article in your September, 2005 Keystone NEWS. You can easily access old newsletters from your login screen of any Keystone program.

PLEASE! SEND US A BACKUP COPY OF YOUR DATA TO TEST!

On a more positive note, it has been a trying year in the transportation field! Huhh?? The good side of that is that you have been forced to use the tools at hand to hone your business to a finer level of efficiency to operate your business profitably. If you have survived the last couple years, you are probably in position to continue moving forward and building your business into the coming year.

Keystone continues to add features and fine-tune tools to help you in these areas. In the management area, we have added our new Management Review, often called a "dashboard" in the software jargon of the day. We envision this as a first step to

providing easier access to high-level management information, allowing you to spot trends and to correct deviations from your plan.

From a "nuts and bolts" perspective, we have added additional security and efficiency through the implementation of our new database, Nexus. This change provides easier setup and management, and faster throughput, including the ability for your database server to take advantage of new multi-processor or multi-core computers.

We continue to work at improving efficiency and throughput for your dispatchers and office staff. As we continue to add capability, more clients are using our Mobile Communications option to efficiently pass new loads and load status between dispatchers and drivers.

In the something-for-everyone department, your bookkeeper will love the new Check Register report.

Thanks for another outstanding year. One of the things we love about being this line of work is all the great people we get to work with, all around the country. We wish you an exciting and successful 2007. *Chris & Bruno*

NEXUS DATABASE

We are introducing a new database for Keystone software called Nexus. We believe this will be a step forward for us and our clients. It takes considerable programming to support a new database, but if provides a better platform for our users and allows us to grow, it is well worth it.

When Keystone first wrote the windows trucking software we used a database called Paradox, or the Borland Database Engine (BDE). In 2000 we switched to FlashFile which was a great improvement. We saw our database support problems go down by 95%. It introduced more stability over a network, less sensitivity to computer crashes, and better database security.

Now we are switching to Nexus, a similar database, and another generational step forward. We are always trying to improve your database stability, reducing your down-time and our database support time. The less interruption to your work flow, the better off we all are. We also pickup these important features:

- Better database encryption for security
- Support for MULTIPROCESSING. More and more computers are coming with dual and even quad core processors that our old database did not utilize
- Better support for terminal service clients by providing a memory transport that does not use the IP address
- Better use of server computer memory
- SQL engine is much more complete for our programming

(Continued on next page. See Nexus...)



Nexus *continued from previous page...*

Before making this decision we reviewed other mainline database engines such as MySQL and MS SQL. The main reason these were not picked was because of performance issues. Our software using these engines took 20-40 TIMES longer to complete tests. We felt if we delivered a solution that was that much slower than the current product, it would not be accepted.

The Nexus database is tuned to the specific programming language and the feature set we use. This makes it hard to beat.

Another issue was cost. Going with MySQL (for business applications they require you to use the paid version) or another database, would have cost our customers thousands of dollars and dramatically driven up prices on new sales. A new server computer would most likely also be required.

We are providing this upgrade to the enhanced version of our software and database at no cost to clients on the Keystone Systems Management Package.

WE LISTEN TO YOU

This year we have implemented 110 software changes suggested by our clients. Be sure to use the LATEST SOFTWARE CHANGES button on the login screen to get a complete list of changes done this year. Below is a list of most of the major changes in 2006.

NEW DATABASE NEXUSDB

Most of our programming effort this year has been to switching to a different back end database. The programming for the

new database was finished in October, and we have been converting clients since then. We currently have about 30 clients using the new database. We will continue to convert clients to the new database throughout 2007.

PROMILES SUPPORT

ProMiles is a mileage software package that competes with ALK's PC*Miler, Rand McNally's MileMaker and Prophecy's Mileage Database. ProMiles is usually the least expensive of the mileage packages and it includes a mapping function in the basic interface.

MANAGEMENT DASHBOARD

With this new feature (available only in the Nexus database version) management can access a quick overview of the entire company. It shows current receivables aging, customer collection follow-up status, and bar graphs summarizing 24 monthly totals for deposits and sales. You may also instantly view which customers have increasing and decreasing volume, and a list of all not-billed invoices. All this on-screen information can be sorted and linked to other detailed information to allow you to see where your business stands.

OTHER TRUCKING

In addition to saving column widths in Dispatch Central, you can now save the order of your columns, which can be dragged into the order you prefer. An INSERT BILL button has been added to the invoice Pick/Drop tab so you can easily insert the billing company as a pick or drop. We have also made more use of color on both the Dispatch Central screen and Messages. Sales tax reporting has been added to trucking for those companies collecting sales tax.

OTHER CHANGES

You can now view or print a bank account register with a beginning balance and daily ending balances for any date range. This register can be run for any checking or savings account, and can be found in the GL program, Bank Reconciliation. You can also now delete a previously finalized bank reconciliation, which allows you to re-access and correct a previous reconciliation. You can also add a 'Vendor Legal Name' which will be used for printing their 1099 with the correct legal name instead of a company trade name. We also have added a new memory manager for our program to allow programs to run slightly faster and use less computer memory.

The 2006 completed suggestions break down as follows:

- 35 Trucking
- 35 Battery
- 11 General
- 9 Payroll
- 7 Accounts Receivable
- 6 Accounts Payable
- 4 General Ledger
- 3 Maintenance

