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Vacations & Holidays

Datatech will be closed on Monday September 1st for Labor Day. Damaris will be on vacation July 16-21st and Isaac will be on vacation July 16-22nd.

Seminars

We had 19 attendees at our last two seminars. Because of the high interest in the seminars, we will be scheduling more classes in the early fall. Look for the schedule in the fall newsletter. Please call Hannah at ext. 101 or email at Hannah@DatatechAg.com if you would like to be notified by email or phone when these are scheduled.

Because of the high number of customers wanting to attend the seminars, we ended up putting customers on a waiting list. Unfortunately, persons with reserved seats did not cancel early enough for those on the waiting list to make arrangements to attend. This created open seats that could have been filled. Because of this situation we will now reserve seats only when payment is received and that fee will be non-refundable.

Installing Datatech Accounting software on new computers

If you plan to install Datatech Accounting software on a new computer or re-install it on an existing computer, please call the Datatech support department ahead of time to receive installation instructions.

If the computer is on a network where the files are stored on a server, a separate installation is needed. In addition, the installation requires manually editing the destination to the location of the files on the server. If the software isn't installed correctly files could be damaged and/or the software will have to be un-installed and re-installed again.

In the past couple months we have had a high number of software support calls because customers and/or their hardware technicians didn't install the software correctly, even when instructions were supplied by us. If you would like Datatech to install the software for you, this can be done by a simple Ultra VNC installation that will allow us to connect to the computer. The cost for having Datatech install software for you is \$75. If you attempt the installation yourself or by your hardware technician and you need assistance, there may also be a charge for this depending on the extent of help provided.

New Features

These features are currently available using the "Check For Updates" option on your Tools menu.

Batch Payables Check Printing - The right click menu now has a "Select Columns to Display" option and the program will keep those selections even if you close and re-open the program.

QuickBooks Export - With some versions of QuickBooks the export would put the employee's name in the Memo field of the check. This is now fixed and the employees name will appear in the Name Field.

Labor Analysis Report - Counts for the number of employees and number of checks have been added to the Labor Analysis Report.

Vendor Check Inquiry - You can now sort the order of checks listed by clicking on date or check # in the grid header. If you print the report the program will use that ordering on the report.

AG NEWS

UFW to assist in bringing in H2A workers from Mexico

The United Farm Workers union, which in the 60's was an opponent of the bracero farm guest worker program with Mexico, has signed an agreement with the Mexican state of Michoacan to help recruit guest workers to the U.S. under the H2A program. UFW President Arturo Rodriguez said, "If this is something that's going to be utilized more in the future, then we've got to get in on it."

The UFW is still lobbying Congress to pass a bill allowing farm laborers to receive conditional legal status and then green cards if they work in agriculture for 3-5 more years. However, even if such a bill is passed, the UFW and growers say after achieving legal status many will move out of the fields into other lines of work. In that case more workers would still be needed.

The agreement with the state of Michoacan, includes provisions for the state to find interested workers and the UFW to match those workers with companies in the U.S. The union's goal would be to get involved in the H2A program to stop abuses of workers in the recruitment process and after they arrive in the U.S. Companies that want to work with the UFW to receive H2A workers would sign a transnational contract to guarantee the rights of worker and the workers would be under a union contract. Manuel Cunha, president of the Nisei Farmers League in Fresno, doesn't imagine many farmers would be interested in bringing in workers under the union contract.

Sources: www.sacbee.com/111/story/871903.html; FELS Newsletter, Vol. 37, No. 5.

Heat Illness Prevention

Heat Illness Prevention has been in the news lately with the recent death of a farm worker. The state has stepped up field inspections to ensure all labor codes are being followed, including heat illness prevention standards.

The California OSHA website contains helpful power point presentations, employee pocket pamphlets, and employer notices to help you stay in compliance with the regulations.

There are four basic steps to complying with the regulations: 1) Train supervisors and employees about heat illness prevention; 2) Provide enough fresh water so each employee can drink 1 quart per hour and encourage them to do so; 3) Provide at least 5 minutes of shade if an employee feels they need a preventative recovery period; and 4) Develop and implement written procedures for complying with the heat illness prevention standard.

Go to www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/heatillnessinfo.html to print the pamphlets and to download the Powerpoint training video.

Protect Workers from Mosquitoes

Employers should take the following steps to protect workers from mosquitoes that can carry diseases including the West Nile virus.

- Train workers on how to protect themselves from mosquitoes and about the potential risks of the West Nile virus.
- Make insect repellents available to employees. Insect repellents should be applied to all exposed skin. Insecticides such as permethrin may be applied to clothing only.
- Recommend clothing that covers most of the skin, such as long sleeve shirts, long pants and socks. Clothing made of insect netting may also be recommended during hot weather to protect employees without over heating them.
- Instruct employees not to handle dead birds or animals without protection such as gloves or using a shovel.
- Eliminate as many sources of standing water as possible. Change water in animal feeding areas every few days.
- When possible schedule work so employees are not at work when mosquitoes are most active (dawn & dusk).

A fact sheet for employers & workers can be printed from: <http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/docs/dept/factshts/worker.pdf>

State of Emergency Declared for Water Shortage

On June 4th an Executive Order was issued by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to proclaim drought conditions, establish directives to assist in increasing water supply and address future water needs. On June 12th regional state of emergencies were announced in nine counties to speed relief to farmers in those areas.

The directives include:

- The Office of Emergency Services (OES) will assist public water agencies with drilling groundwater wells or improve existing wells and delivery systems for human consumption, sanitation and emergency protective measures, such as fire fighting.
- Expedite existing grant programs for water conservation and water use reduction that will ease drought conditions in 2008 or 2009.
- Various water rights urgency change petitions will be filed and operational changes will be made to reservoirs to increase water deliveries to the San Joaquin Valley.
- The Department of Water Resources is to work with the California Department of Food and Agriculture and other federal agencies to identify potential federal funding for local water agencies and farmers to assist in rapid installation of conservation and irrigation management systems.
- Conduct an aggressive water conservation and outreach program with local water agencies and other water related organizations.

Full Press Releases: <http://gov.ca.gov/press-release/9896>
<http://gov.ca.gov/press-release/9796/>

ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE - FAQ

My balance sheet accounts are not bringing forward the prior year's ending balance. What's wrong?

Several years ago an entry was added to the Program Setup for a G/L Starting Date. This was used to ignore transactions in a prior fiscal year that may have been imported from another program. It also allowed individual Accounts Payable & Accounts Receivable Invoices to be entered for tracking purposes, but not to affect the General Ledger balances.

In some cases a user may inadvertently enter a date in this field that is not accurate. This would cause any transactions before this date to be ignored by the program.

In addition, this date would have been blank in accounting files for customers that have used Datatech's software for many years. This past year a modification was made for the software to calculate and insert a date for all customers. In some cases the date calculated by the software was not correct.

To verify your G/L Starting Date, go into the Review Journal Transactions. When there are *NO* Dates, G/L #'s or Source Journal selected the first transaction will be the oldest entered into the software. This will be your G/L Starting Date. This should be entered in the General Ledger section of the Program Setup (Tools menu), *unless you have special circumstances as mentioned in the first paragraph.*

I can't pull up entries in Daily Payroll or print reports with my Operator name. What's wrong?

The "Viewing" Operator field and the Operator selections on reports are 8 characters long. The Operator Setup allows you to enter names up to 16 characters. However, if you are running reports or viewing entries in Daily Payroll by operator, you will need to keep your operator name(s) eight characters or less. To edit this, go to the Operator Setup on the Tools menu. Select your Name from the lookup menu, edit the name and click on Save. If you don't have access to the Operator Setup, contact your Controller or Office Manager to make the change for you.

How do I verify the taxable wages reported to the State/IRS when I have non-taxable deductions?

The Wage Detail Report & Payroll Journal report gross wages paid to the employees. If you have pre-tax deductions, such as 401K, IRA, or a flexible spending account or if an employee has exceeded the limit for one of the taxes your taxable wages will not be equal to the total gross wages.

In addition, pretax deductions are not always non-taxable on all taxes. For example some deductions are subject to Social Security (FICA) & Medicare taxes, but not subject to State and Federal Income Tax.

For purposes of explaining how to verify reported wages, we'll use an example of a company that has 401-K, (non-taxable on Federal & State Income tax) and Flexible Spending Account (non-taxable on all taxes).

At the end of the quarter and year, in addition to verifying the gross wages through the Wage Detail Report & Payroll Journal, you can use the Earnings Records to get your taxable wages. To do this you would select "Print Totals by Wage Type". At the end of your report, your totals will look similar to this:

Company Totals:	15,138.15	170.00	15,308.15
Totals by wage type:			
401(k) Deduction	62.18		
Base Hourly Incentive Pay	901.60		
Flexible Spending Account	80.00		
Incentive Pay, Piecework	68.50		
Minimum Wage Adjustment	719.10		
Overtime Hours	510.00		
Piecework	4,092.27		
Regular Hours	6,474.50		
Salary	2,400.00		

In this case the gross wages are \$15,308.15. The 401-K total is \$62.18 and Flexible Spending Account \$80.00.

To calculate your Federal & State PIT wages you would reduce the gross wages by both deductions. To calculate your S.S., Medicare and SDI you would reduce your gross wages by only the Flexible Spending Account deductions. Then you can verify these wages against the Archive File report as shown below.

If you have a pretax plan in place we suggest that as part of the closing process you print the Employee Tax Schedule. This report will give you the gross wages along with the taxable wage amounts. If you have archived and cleared you can also use the Archive File Report. Below is an example of the Archive File Report, which will look similar to this:

Total Wages	Fed Wages	State Wages	SDI Wages	SUI Wages	
15,308.15	15,165.97	15,165.97	15,228.15	15,228.15	12

From this example you can see the Gross Wages in the Total Wages Column. The Federal & State Wages are reduced by the amount of both deductions since both are exempt from withholding. The SDI and SUI wages are reduced only by the amount of the Flexible Spending account since 401k wages are taxable on these.

As previously mentioned, the taxable wages can also be affected by an employee reaching the tax limit. The Employee Tax Schedule is a good report for reviewing this. We suggest getting familiar with these reports and also the reporting requirements for the quarterly and yearly tax reports if you have these pretax plans.



Everything You Wanted to Know About VoIP But Were Afraid to Ask

You may have heard of VoIP or digital phone service. VoIP is one of the latest buzz words in the technology industry and is an exciting technology. VoIP has actually been around for a number of years, yet many are unaware or unsure exactly what VoIP is or why it can be so beneficial.

What is VoIP?

Simply stated, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP), is the transmission of a phone call over a data network. The data network can be a local network or an Internet connection. One of the main differences between VoIP and standard phone lines is the type of network.

Traditional phone service is run on a circuit switched network where the network is smart and the endpoints (phones) are dumb. This means the network handles signaling protocols, compression/decompression and coding/decoding of audio.

VoIP uses dumb networks and smart endpoints. Endpoints negotiate the signaling protocols and do the compression/decompression and coding/decoding of audio. The network is unaware of what it is transmitting, it's just sending packets of data back and forth. This means it does not matter what the network is, as long as it can transmit IP data packets.

What are the practical uses and benefits of VoIP?

For home and business users, digital phone service providers can provide VoIP service that can replace your current phone service. The technical term for a VoIP service provider is ITSP (Internet Telephony Service Provider). There are some things to keep in mind however, which will be covered in the next section.

The VoIP service may not cost less than a standard line, but it can save on long distance charges. Many features that are extra with a standard phone line are included with VoIP service. Most plans include unlimited local and domestic long distance calls. More expensive plans also cover unlimited international calls to some countries. International calls that aren't covered generally have lower per minute costs than traditional phone service.

Also available at minimal or no cost are secondary phone numbers. As an example, you have VoIP service and live in Fresno. You have family in L.A. You can add a second number with an L.A. area code. Your family can call the L.A. number and not get charged for long distance. This is also handy for businesses who want to have local numbers in different markets but have their office in just one.

For businesses there are uses that can save money as well as provide a more efficient use of resources. In addition to being

able to use ITSP's as described above, VoIP can also be implemented in the following ways:

Multi-Site Operations/Remote Extensions:

Whether you have a warehouse a block away, or a remote office in another country, VoIP can link multiple sites together into one unified phone system with a high speed Internet connection with no toll charges. This can be done by linking two or more systems together or with one system in a main office and remote extensions in branch offices.

Home Extensions:

Similar to remote offices, individuals can have remote extensions in their home that are just another extension on the business phone system. This is good for businesses that require someone to always be on-call or for teleworkers who logon remotely to the network but also want to place and receive business calls.

Toll Bypass:

This is used with multiple sites and phone system in each location. For example you have a system in Fresno CA and one in Omaha NE. The phone systems are linked via VoIP, but are attached to standard phone lines at each location for outside calls. Toll bypass would allow a caller in Omaha, who happens to be calling a customer in Fresno, to bypass their own phone lines via the Internet & VoIP and use the lines connected to the Fresno system. This saves long distance toll charges on the Omaha phone service.

What are the considerations to make?

If you have a DSL connection, keep in mind that DSL is part of your phone service, so you can't get rid of the phone company altogether. It's also difficult to get them to install a bare DSL line (DSL Internet without phone service), so if you won't save enough on long distance to make up for the cost of VoIP service, it may not be for you.

For all VoIP calls, whether multi-site networking or VoIP phone service, audio quality depends on the quality and bandwidth of the connection. It rarely works well on wireless type connections because of high packet latency and missed packet issues. For businesses considering VoIP, it's important to have a professional evaluate your needs and network.

When your phone service comes from an ITSP, there are differences and limitations to emergency 911 service. Each provider operates differently, so if you are considering VoIP phone service, make sure you carefully read all information on 911 service to understand the differences.

Comments or questions? James@Datatech-IT.com