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Mun-Ease News

Release 2015 - v. 16.00 Ships

Welcome! This newsletter describes enhancements in the new 2015 release. Users who have requested our release in a CD format will receive two CDs (a CD containing the 32 and 64-bit Elevate Db version of the 2015 release and a CD containing the 32 and 64-bit SQL Server version of the 2015 release).

As we have mentioned in prior newsletters, there are many advantages of a native 64-bit program over one using older 32-bit technology. They are: (a) an ability to use more memory (32-bit applications can only address 4-gigabytes of memory while a 64-bit Windows application can address up to 192 gigabytes of memory), (b) newer user interfaces – the Delphi XE5 compiler that we use supports the latest Windows enhancements including the Metropolis interface that is used on Windows tablets, and (c) an ability to compile our software to other hardware platforms. While we don't have any plans to do so, the XE5 compiler could allow us to cross-compile Mun-Ease to other devices – e. g., Apple MACs, iPads running iOS, and Android computers/tablets.

We'll mention one other important benefit associated with our new release. Our new compiler is a Unicode-based compiler. Unicode compilers generally encode characters in 16 bits as opposed to older compilers which encode characters in 8 bits. Thus Unicode compilers can represent the symbols of all the languages in the world whereas the older compilers are limited to the characters and symbols of the 26-character Latin-based alphabets.

Why mention this bit of trivia? When you buy a debt management software package, you implicitly assume that the vendor will keep the product current with changes in technology, regulatory / tax law, and accounting policies. Otherwise, the value of your investment will eventually diminish to zero. Our decision to upgrade to a Unicode-based compiler will help ensure viability of our software for years to come as the rest of the industry makes this transition.

Recent Tax/Regulatory Changes Affecting Tax-Exempt Bonds

Arbitrage Computation Credits

The annual arbitrage computation credits for 2015 have been increased to $1,650 from $1,620 in 2014. Note that Mun-Ease automatically computes the dollar amount of the yearly computations credit when you press the F11 function key while in the Rebate Transaction grid. The value is determined by the transaction year entered by the user.

BABs Subsidy Payments

The Bipartisan Budget Act of 2014 continues cuts to Build America Bonds subsidy payments for FY 2015. The automatic spending cuts are the result of the budget sequestration process that began in FY 2013.

Background: The original BABs program allowed state and local governments to issue taxable bonds in 2009 and 2010 and to receive a subsidy from the federal government equal to

35% of the interest (45% for economic recovery zone bonds).

In FY 2013, the subsidy payments were reduced by 8.7%. In FY 2014, payments were reduced by 7.2%. In FY 2015, subsidy payments are reduced by 7.3%.

Recovery of Rebate Overpayments

The IRS has released a rule that provides a deadline for filing claims requesting a refund of a rebate overpayment. Claims must now be filed within two years of the final arbitrage computation date. (November 13, 2014 Federal Register - TD 9701).

Other Enhancements Included in this Release

Outlook Calendar Integration

We provide a feature that allows users to integrate events in the Mun-Ease bond calendar to their Outlook calendar and to the Outlook calendar of other people that they designate. When sending an automated e-mail alert, the sender can include a Vcalendar (.vcs) attachment created by Mun-Ease. The attachment allows Mun-Ease users to update the Outlook calendar of the e-mail recipients. Instructions for using this new feature are included in the *Latest2015.pdf* and can be viewed by clicking on the Mun-Ease *help / what's new* menu option

New Debt Service Reserve Calculations and Reports

We have added two new debt service reserve (DSR) reports in Mun-Ease. The DSR reports can be generated by choosing the *Arbitrage / Debt Service Reserve Reports* menu option.

These two new reports are in addition to report #91. This report displays the details behind the computation of the allowable DSR fund. The allowable amount for the DSR fund is the lesser of the maximum annual debt service, 125% of average annual debt service, or

original 10% of principal. This calculation is referred to as the three-part test. Report #91 performs this calculation as of the date of issuance.

The first new DSR report displays the results of the three-part test over the life of the bond issue and not just at the date of issuance (report #24j).

The second new DSR report allows the user to calculate the maximum allowable debt service reserve fund for a group of bonds that are issued as part of a common plan of finance (report #131).

New Database Table

The 2015 release includes a new database table that records the detailed expenditures by allocation coding block. This information can be optionally summarized and loaded into the *Status of Bonds Authorized, Issued, and Cancelled* report (#58).

Installing the 2015 Release

The installation process for the 2015 release is very similar to the installation routine that you followed for previous versions of Mun-Ease. We have included .pdf files on the CD that contain updated installation instructions. Feel free to call us anytime and will gladly assist you with the installation.

SQL Server Database Permissions

As mentioned in the previous section, the 16.0 version of Mun-Ease contains a new database table for allocated expenditures. The new table is added to the database when the first user initiates Mun-Ease subsequent to the installation of the 16.00 release. Upon start-up, Mun-Ease asks the first user to verify that he has sufficient rights (*db_owner* and/or *db_creator*) before attempting to make these changes. Thus the first user must have *db_owner* or *db_creator* permissions or the changes cannot be made. After the database changes have

been made by the first user, Mun-Ease will no longer inquire about permissions nor will users need them.

Note that the above discussion of permissions applies only to the SQL Server version of Mun-Ease. The EDB version of Mun-Ease will automatically add the new table without regard to the initial user's access rights.

Tips: Importing SLGS Rates

The Treasury Direct web site allows users to download SLGS data in three different formats: text (.TXT), comma-delimited (.CSV) or XML (.XML). Mun-Ease can import SLGS rates from the Treasury Direct web site in the comma-delimited format.

The Treasury Direct website provides current-day SLGS rates and SLGS rates from the past. Note that the format of the SLGS data on the web site changed in late 2012. Mun-Ease can import SLGS rates in both the pre-2013 format and the current format.

Tip: We recommend that you change a setting in the Control Panel before attempting to open a SLGS rate scale in a comma-delimited format (.CSV). By default, Windows assumes that you want to open a comma-delimited file with Microsoft Excel. Excel incorrectly tries to convert the month-year field to a date field and reformats the data accordingly. To remedy this problem, choose the *default programs / associate a file type / protocol with a program* to change the default program from Excel to Notepad.

2015 GFOA Conference

We will be demonstrating Mun-Ease in the exhibitor's hall at the GFOA annual conference in Philadelphia (June 1-2). Stop by booth #132 anytime for a demonstration or a chat.