



## Make Your New Year's Resolutions for Municipal Government Success

We at Point Software hope that all our current and future customers enjoy success in the new year and we resolve to do our best to help bring you that success. The most crucial ingredient in your success, however, is you. As you make your resolutions for the year ahead, here are a few you may want to consider adding to your list in order to reach that goal.

### **Get Connected with Point**

With everything you are responsible for, we believe you have a right to superior customer service. In order for us to deliver that level of service, you need to provide us with remote connectivity to your machine with an application like the reliable and cost effective GoToMyPC. This accessibility allows us to install patches and upgrades, place excise and property tax data, and examine issues in the most direct, efficient way possible.

### **Plan Well for Tax Billing**

Scheduling is the key to a stress-free tax billing season. Develop a calendar of your duties and deadlines now to keep you on track throughout the year. Massachusetts local officials can use the municipal calendar published by the DOR's Division of Local Services as a starting point. The calendar should reflect a team approach on the part of the various members of your municipality's financial department.

When submitting your assessment data for conversion, don't take it for granted that the legal file will balance on the first try. Build in extra time for error correction in case it doesn't. Assessors should plan on making themselves available to help address any issues.

### **Get Computer Savvy**

Raise your computer literacy level this year and you will discover ways to use your PC more effectively. An inexpensive way to educate yourself is to visit a bookstore and pick up a good computer guide. If you learn best in a classroom environment, consider signing up for a course or workshop at a community college.

### **Automate Payment Posting**

Explore the various automation options that the Point collection system has to offer. These include bar code printing and scanning for bills, tax service payment import, deputy payment import combined with the Point Deputy Collector service, lockbox payment import, and our Online Payment Exchange Software.

### **Talk to a Business Developer**

Point Business Developer Scott Choiniere has been busy traveling the marketplace to help customers develop a plan for success that's right for their municipality. If you do not already have an appointment with Scott, make a point of setting time aside in your



schedule to meet with him. Together, you can find affordable ways to streamline processes and add functionality.

### **Perform a Hardware Review**

Review your computer hardware or have it reviewed by an IT professional to determine its suitability for your office. You may discover that you are due for a replacement; if you are running a machine that is three or more years old, failure is inevitable. Newer equipment can also boost your speed. A current PC runs faster and a wheel mouse enables you to navigate more efficiently.

### **Prepare for Disaster**

Your data is your most valuable asset, so safeguarding it is

absolutely vital. If you have not already done so, put into place a plan for disaster recovery.

While developing this plan, keep in mind the backup tips we have given you in past issues of our newsletter: Move away from backup mediums that use obsolete/fading technology. Establish a regular backup schedule. Test your backups. Date your backups. Store your backups in a safe place, preferably an offsite storage facility. Connect a UPS to your server(s) to protect against power surges/outages that may disrupt the backup process. If you put these recommendations into practice, you should be in good shape.



## Calendar of Events

Date(s)	Event	Location
Jan. 4, 2008	Conn. IAAO Holiday Meeting	Hawthorne Restaurant/Inn Routes 5 & 15 2387-2421 Berlin Turnpike Berlin, CT
Jan. 10, 2008	IAAO Forum 937: House Construction, Design and Systems <i>Sponsored by the Massachusetts Chapter of IAAO</i>	Wellesley Free Library 53 Washington Street Wellesley, MA
Jan. 17, 2008	MAAO Winter Meeting	Lombardo's 6 Billings Street Randolph, MA
Jan. 31, 2008	RI League of Cities & Towns 8 <sup>th</sup> Annual Convention <i>Come see us at Booth 17!</i>	Crowne Plaza Hotel 801 Greenwich Avenue Warwick, RI

### MAAO WINTER SCHOOL 2008

Shrewsbury Senior Center  
100 Maple Street  
Shrewsbury, MA 01540

Register Online at <http://www.maa.org/>

#### MAAO Course 200: Principles of Assessing Procedures

**Class Dates:** February 8, 9, 15, 16, 22

**Registration Deadline:** January 25

#### MAAO Workshop: Introduction to USPAP for the Assessor

**Class Date:** February 29

**Registration Deadline:** February 15

#### MAAO Course 5: Mass Appraisal of Real Property

**Class Dates:** March 14, 15, 21, 22, 28

**Registration Deadline:** February 29

### 2008 Point Holiday Schedule

Point's offices will be closed on the following dates in 2008. Please be aware of these dates so that you may update your office calendars accordingly.

Tuesday, January 1, 2008	New Year's Day
Monday, February 18, 2008	President's Day
Monday, May 26, 2008	Memorial Day
Friday, July 4, 2008	Independence Day
Monday, September 1, 2008	Labor Day
Monday, October 13, 2008	Columbus Day
Tuesday, November 11, 2008	Veterans Day
Thursday, November 27, 2008	Thanksgiving Day
Friday, November 28, 2008	Day after Thanksgiving
Thursday, December 25, 2008	Christmas Day

## Tech Tips

The *extension* is an essential part of a filename. This suffix that appears after the "dot" (period) helps both you and your computer to recognize the file type and know what programs can open it. If the wrong extension is selected when the file is saved or if the extension is changed, the software intended to use the file may not be able to access it or the data it contains.

Given the importance of filename extensions, it is a good idea to become better acquainted with them. The first step in that process is to be able to see them. By default, filename extensions are hidden in Windows. The following instructions will make them visible in either *My Computer* or *Windows Explorer*.

1. Open the **Tools** menu.
2. Select **Folder Options**.
3. Select the **View** tab.
4. Under "Advanced settings," deselect ("uncheck") **Hide extensions for known file types**.
5. Click **Apply** then click **OK**.

Now let's look at some of the filename extensions commonly used by Point applications. Refer to the list below.

Extension	File Type
chm	help file
dat	Deputy payment file
dta	abatement/exemption file
doc	MS Word document
exe	executable (program file)
hlp	help file
htm or html	web page
jpg or jpeg	image file, esp. for photos
pdf	Adobe Reader document
rel "one"	tax service payment file
rmv	motor vehicle commitment
rpt	report file
rtf	Rich Text Format file
txt	plain text document
wri	Windows Write document
xls	MS Excel worksheet
zip	compressed file/folder