



## 10 Money-saving Ideas Your Municipality Should Consider

When pressed to cut costs, the standard course of action is to assess the line items in your budget and decide where cuts can be made. Often this approach requires very difficult choices that diminish services. This month, we asked ourselves what solutions we could think of if we were in that position. The resulting concepts in some cases reflect non-traditional thinking, offering innovative ways to reduce costs for tight economic times.

We'd like to share 10 of these ideas to get you started:

1. **Use technology to replace manual processes.** Time is money. Point applications have always been designed with automation in mind, featuring labor-saving functionality such as barcode scanning for payment posting, rollover of recurring exemptions, and electronic turnovers between municipal offices.
2. **Share resources with other municipal departments.** Most municipalities operate with a "mine and yours" mentality. The minute a mindset shift occurs and you approach your needs as a municipal business, savings are possible. Ask yourself if there is duplicated equipment in the school department and the town hall. Often

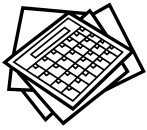
a folding machine exists in both venues. Paying maintenance on both machines could be reduced to a single expense given their modest frequency of use.

We also frequently see multiple offices with similar high-end printers. Placing one on the network and in a common area allows one to be shared while shrinking overall maintenance costs.

3. **Barter for services.** Deputy Services are a good place to barter for services. Most deputies will offer you something to keep this business. For example, Point offers a 10% technology credit that is commonly used to offset the cost of support, new product acquisition, bill printing, and hardware purchases.
4. **Outsource tasks that incur casual labor.** Many customers pay for part-time clerical help to manage the workload when bills are due. Alternatively, we have a few customers that cut this expense and employer liability by using Point as a lockbox agency.
5. **Buy pre-stamped envelopes.** With pre-stamped



- USPS envelopes, you may not need a postage machine. This results in the elimination of annual rental and supplies costs for this device. If we could do this, we'd save over \$2,400.00 yearly.
6. **Eliminate costly equipment by outsourcing.** We had one customer eliminate a \$1,700 per month expense by getting rid of their folding machine and outsourcing this task to us.
7. **Rethink senior work credits.** Although this suggestion is controversial, creating work for seniors makes you their employer. The final cost and liability if they get hurt while in your employ needs to be considered against the cost for outsourcing this work.
8. **Hire a network administrator.** While this is an expense, savings result as a professionally maintained network provides the priceless assets of security, connectivity and disaster recovery.
9. **Create a reserve fund.** When preparing your budget, anticipate that you will need to replace items and invest in technology improvements. Getting blindsided by unexpected expenses is always more costly.
10. **Buy in bulk.** Most items cost less when bought in quantity. Supplies are a great example of this when compared to "as needed" spending.



## Calendar of Events

Date(s)	Event	Location
Feb. 27	USPAP Update Workshop	Mansfield Town Hall 6 Park Row Mansfield, MA
Mar. 3	IAAO Forum 917: How to Critique an Appraisal <i>Sponsored by the Litchfield Area Assessor Association</i>	Harwinton Town Hall 100 Bentley Drive Harwinton, CT
Mar. 22-25	InterSystems DEVCON 2009	Arizona Biltmore Resort 2400 East Missouri Avenue Phoenix, AZ
Mar. 23-27	IAAO Course 300: Fundamentals of Mass Appraisal <i>Sponsored by the Massachusetts Chapter of IAAO</i>	Burlington Town Hall Annex Public Meeting Room 29 Center Street Burlington, MA
Mar. 25-27	CTx Annual Seminar	Mystic Marriot Hotel & Spa 625 North Road (Rte. 117) Groton, CT

### Use **DART** to Run Your Tax Title Report



Are you stumped as to why you can't generate your tax title report? If you are a user of the Point collection system, chances are it's because you don't have the accounts flagged with all of the necessary flag codes.

There are several flags used in the tax title process, but an easy way to remember which ones to use and the order to use them in is **DART**:

- **D** for *Demand*
- **A** for *Advertisement*
- **R** for *Registry of Deeds*
- **T** for *Tax Title*

So the next time you're having trouble with your tax title report, just remember to DART and run!

**MAAO COURSE 4: Narrative Appraisal Report Writing  
(MBREA Course REA-1A)**

**Location**

Mansfield Town Hall  
6 Park Row  
Mansfield, MA

**Registration Deadline**

February 27, 2009

**Class Dates**

Mar. 6, 13, 20 & 27 and Apr. 3, 2009

**Online Registration Form**

<http://www.maa.org/Reg/regc4.asp>

**Course Description/Directions**

[http://www.maa.org/content/course\\_4\\_2009.pdf](http://www.maa.org/content/course_4_2009.pdf)

## Tech Tips

Collaboration is an essential part of most work projects and one that requires good communication among all involved parties. Microsoft Office, a standard software suite for business and government entities, offers a simple yet effective collaboration tool. Office products Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access all provide a *file summary* that project members can use to transmit important details to each other.

The file summary can be viewed and edited from within the associated application. To access the file summary, open the **File** menu, select **Properties** (or **Database Properties** in Access), then click the **Summary** tab if it is not already on top.

Below is an overview of some of the properties you can modify in the file summary:

- **Title:** This is the actual title of the document.
- **Subject:** This is a brief synopsis of the document.
- **Author:** By default, this is the name of the file's creator as listed in the software license. You can change the "author" field to show the names of all individuals working on the file.
- **Company:** This is the name of the organization responsible for creating the file. You could use the name of your municipality or of your municipal department.
- **Keywords:** These are words or phrases used for file searches.
- **Comments:** This is any other useful information you want to share, such as project notes, target dates or printing instructions.

When you are done adding information to the summary, click the **OK** button. Your changes will be saved when you save the file.