



## Take Action Now to Reduce the Sting of Impending Budget Cuts

Governor Deval Patrick announced on October 15 that a request for expanded emergency budget-cutting authority will be included as part of his plan to balance the state budget. The Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) believes that to be “a signal that mid-year local aid cuts will be part of the mix.”

That bleak forecast has towns and cities throughout the commonwealth once again examining their options for dealing with budget cuts looming on the horizon. Point is examining them, too, and has brainstormed a number of ideas that can help take the sting out of the anticipated cuts. We urge all customers to take a close look at these concepts for immediate consideration and action to be prepared.

### Point Term Contracts

Point is now offering customers the option of securing term agreements in order to stabilize annual licensing and support fees. This option allows municipalities to spread the cost of anticipated upgrades across multiple years. By thinking beyond your immediate needs, you can leverage new technology with almost no impact to your existing budget. As an example, an upgrade to Point’s next generation software using term licensing could be achieved for a mere \$14 a month for a one user

license. With a modest investment in your future, you gain access to the newest Point technology that integrates a Web interface with a Caché database component.

### Outsourced Lockbox

In the last year, many municipal offices in the Bay State have undergone auditing of their operations, resulting in a report of suggested changes. One of the seemingly boilerplate recommendations is to engage a lockbox service, yet the cost of traditional lockbox services is often prohibitive. Point conceived and implemented a competitive lockbox solution that continues to win over customers as a potential tool for cost containment.

### Deputy Technology Credits

We continue to promote our deputy technology credit program because it is all about helping our customers. It’s not just us saying that, either; tax collectors who routinely use their earned credits ask us why more customers don’t avail themselves of the benefits of the program. While we recognize some have longstanding relationships with their deputies that they may be hesitant to give up, it is also impossible to ignore the value our program has yielded to our Deputy customers – especially now when everyone is being asked to provide the



same level of service with less funding. To calculate your potential credits, simply multiply 10% of the money paid to your Deputy this year. That amount would be your technology credit if you used Point as your Deputy. That number alone may cure any anticipated budget cuts.

### Service Bureau Printing

Point has been rendering service bureau printing on behalf of customers since 1991, eliminating the headaches of managing this task internally. By putting this job in the experienced hands of Point’s staff, cities and towns enjoy a number of benefits including reduced operating expenses. One customer reported that eliminating the cost of maintaining and leasing on-site folding and stuffing equipment alone more than paid for using the Point service bureau.

### We Can Help

Over the years, Point has prided itself on working in partnership with our customers. That responsibility is more important than ever in these tough economic times. Rather than rest, Point has continued to sharpen its services and products and apply creativity to the economic pressure faced by our customers. We remain committed to putting our newest and best technology in place for you.

Given the uniqueness of each customer’s situation, the best way to accomplish that is by engaging in a dialog to solve it as partners. A famous thinker once offered this truism: “Problems cannot be solved by the same level of thinking that created them.” His name was Albert Einstein and his wisdom seems pertinent in addressing the challenges we face together.



## Calendar of Events

Date(s)	Event	Location
Nov. 12, 2009	CAAO Fall Meeting	Aqua Turf Club 556 Mulberry Street Southington, CT
Nov. 19, 2009	CTx Fall Meeting	Aqua Turf Club Wagon Room 556 Mulberry Street Southington, CT
Dec. 9, 2009	MCTA Holiday Meeting	Hogan Campus Center College of the Holy Cross 1 College Street Worcester, MA

### Tax Billing Conversion Reminder

By now, all quarterly towns running Point's collection system should have received their tax billing conversion questionnaires. If you have not, please contact our customer service department at 1.800.368.9538.

We would also like to remind customers that we need your *complete*\* conversion package before we can begin the conversion process and that the earlier we receive it, the better. All required items (listed below) must be received no later than **December 16, 2009**.

#### Items Provided by the Tax Collector

- Copy of the tax collector's database on CD-ROM
- Completed conversion questionnaire

#### Items Provided by the Assessor

- Real estate and personal property legal files
- Verified control totals (electronic or paper format) from the legal files
- Verified and signed LA-4 report and supporting Tax Classification recap
- Verified and signed district LA-4 reports (RE/PP), if you have districts
- Personal property district file, if you issue personal property district bills
- Verified exemption totals report, if you have exemptions
- Electronic exemption file and the dates and batch number to use for pre-posting them
- Betterment & lien totals report, if you have betterments & liens
- Any special instructions or concerns you want us to be aware of
- Approved tax rate (**TIP:** To satisfy this requirement, many municipalities send Point a signed copy of the first page of the recap sheet that they sent to the Department of Revenue.)

\* You have the option of "pre-submitting" your tax billing conversion package if the only pending item is an approved tax rate. Pre-submission allows us to complete the validation stage of the conversion process, which involves quality assurance procedures such as checking the totals and verifying that the parcel IDs correspond between record sets. With that "heavy lifting" out of the way, you can get your data back in little time once the tax rate is approved.

## Tech Tips

Last month's Tech Tips column discussed the importance of backing up your database on a regular basis and provided two different methods for backing up a Caché database, used by ReportNET™. One of those methods used the Caché System Management Portal, accessible through the Caché Cube that is located in the system tray on the Point server.



(Caché Cube, running database)

The System Management Portal method offers you the advantage of not needing to stop Caché. Using that method, however, does entail a little housekeeping.

Two files are created every time a backup is run through the System Management Portal: a CBK file that contains the database and a backup status log that is saved as a text file. Each of those files contains the date of the backup in their filenames, in the format YYYYMMDD (e.g. 20091102 for November 2, 2009).

As long as you are copying those files (or the folder that contains them) to a CD or flash drive every time you make a backup, you only need to and should keep the most recent files on the server. All other files in the backup folder can be deleted. Those files can take up a lot of space if allowed to accumulate, particularly the CBK files.

The best time to delete old Caché backup files is right after doing a backup. The name and location of the backup folder ("device") is displayed during the backup process and you need to go to that folder anyway to copy the current backup files. If you want to take care of it later, you can also go through the steps of the backup process until you reach the "Run Backup" screen to get the folder name then just cancel the process.