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### *From the July 2009 Issue*

The current recession has affected most industries, and the home builder and commercial construction industries have been hit especially hard, with new starts and permits just starting to rebound from 50-year lows. And these numbers are all the more agonizing since they directly followed a decade of tremendous record-breaking growth in the construction market.

Some of the incentives in the 2009 stimulus bill, including the first-time homebuyer credit and public infrastructure spending may bolster building, but construction firms and contractors need specialized software more than ever before to help strengthen their businesses by running more efficiently and tracking all costs.

Conversely, many service-oriented contractors such as heat and air firms, remodelers, electricians and plumbers, have seen somewhat of an increase in activity, as some Americans have chosen to add-on to their existing houses, improve energy efficiency or make other alterations, as an alternative to getting a new home. For these businesses, managing growth, service schedules and client relationships is more important than ever, and several products are available that incorporate features designed specifically for these tasks.

Fortunately, there are many options for accounting and business management software for both builders and service contractors, ranging from basic job cost add-on modules for general business accounting systems to entire systems designed specifically for either the construction or contractor industry.

Some programs are general business management software that have an available

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and taking capabilities for dispatch, scheduling and customer data input, along with integration to web-based mapping systems.

Global and U.S. economic conditions aren't going to change overnight, which makes it all the more important for construction and contractor firms to more aggressively manage their business, from the nuts and bolts of their financials, precise project reporting, efficient scheduling of people and resources, and marketing activities. Those who are most successful at managing these tasks today are those who will be best positioned to survive the downturn and thrive when it passes.

When the current glut of homes on the market is absorbed, construction will rebound. After all, people will always need new homes and they will always need their houses or its utilities repaired, remodeled or replaced. Since construction and service contractors are often a large client segment for professional accounting practices, helping to ensure their success is also of significant interest to their public accountants. This review section looks at several programs available for builders and contractors that may be able to help your clients survive and thrive.

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### [Aptora – Total Office Manager](#)

Total Office Manager is a comprehensive, high-end contractor accounting package, specializing in support for service industry businesses such as telecom, electrical, HVAC, plumbing, appliance repair and other such contractors.

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### [A-Systems – JobView](#)

In a market seemingly dominated by programs that

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Orders.

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### CUC Software – Contractor Essentials

The Contractor Essentials program from CUC Software is, as its name implies, a specialized business management system for service-oriented contracting companies. Contractor Essentials was initially developed nearly 30 years ago within a contracting firm.

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### CYMA Systems Inc. – Accounting

#### For Windows Job Costing

The Job/Project Costing program offered by CYMA is an optional module that works with CYMA's Financial Management System, a business management and accounting suite that includes core GL, AP and AR functions, along with bank reconciliation, inventory, payroll, and sales and purchase order management.

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### eTEK International Inc.

#### – eTEK for Microsoft Office

The eTEK for Microsoft Office system is a business management and bookkeeping system designed for mid-sized and growing entities, providing integrated modules for GL, AP, AR, inventory, payroll, purchasing, sales, budgeting, and job costing and estimating.

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### [MICS, Inc. – Builder Information System](#)

Builder Information System (BIS) offers construction-focused businesses a solid and completely integrated suite of accounting and business management applications.

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### [Sage – Peachtree Premium](#)

#### [Accounting For Construction 2010](#)

The Peachtree brand has long been a favorite of professional accountants for their small business clients, providing a broad base of general bookkeeping capabilities, including GL, AP, AR, invoicing, inventory, sales orders and contact management, along with good business management functions, reporting and analysis features.

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### [Sage – Sage Timberline Office](#)

Sage Timberline Office offers mid-sized and larger construction and real estate businesses a high-end, thoroughly comprehensive collection of accounting and management applications.

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## **2009 Review of Construction/Contractor Accounting Programs — Comparison Chart**

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