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From the April/May 2006 [Review of Construction Accounting Software](#)

Forefront – Version 12.5 from Dexter + Chaney is a scalable product designed for medium to large construction-related companies. With industry-specific modules

designed for construction, electrical, heavy/highway (H/H) and material management,

Forefront can fit the needs of a variety of companies. And with ODBC capability, Forefront can also be scaled down to work for even smaller companies.

Bill Zobel of Banks Construction Company, a heavy/highway contractor that has provided asphalt and grading services since 1948, says: “Forefront provides a tremendous amount of integration between the financial requirements of construction accounting and the job cost management reporting used by our project managers. We are a quantity-based contractor, and we measure our productivity in units. With quantity tracking, Forefront allows for us to determine and compare our actual cost to our projected costs. This allows us to calculate costs to complete and profit gain or fade on a job.” The company has approximately 250 employees.

Zobel says his company selected this package based on customization towards H/H contractors. He appreciates the user interface and its ability to make each data entry and reporting field similar. “It met our needs for scale ticket interface with our asphalt plant and equipment cost accounting,” he says. “I was also impressed that the support staff consists of prior users and/or practicing accountants.”

LEARNING CURVE — 5 Stars

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Common sense approach means that you won't have to spend time wondering where to perform certain tasks. An excellent Help function is provided with Forefront and offers an overview of the system, step-by-step procedures and a host of interactive links. Most modules contain user-defined fields for program customization, and you can change the look and feel of the program by customizing the interface.

Data-entry screens are well organized and contain a series of navigational tools including options to move back to the previous screen, forward to the next screen, view a history of all screens visited, open a navigational toolbar or view current session information. Fields contains a lookup option for speedy data entry, and, when completed, you can choose to save the entry, cancel it or update it as needed.

MODULES & FUNCTIONALITY — 5 Stars

As noted earlier, Forefront offers industry-specific software for a variety of construction- related businesses including General Construction, H/H Construction, Mechanical and HVAC, Electrical, Utility Construction and Materials Suppliers. Modules available include AP, AR, Cash Management, Payroll, Document Imaging, Equipment Control, Equipment Tracking, Esti-Link, Fixed Assets, GL, Human Resources, Info-Link, Inventory Control, Job Cost, Order Processing, Preventive Maintenance, Project Management, Purchase Order, Remote-Link, Sales Analysis, Scale Interface, Service Contracts, Small Tools, Time & Materials, and Work Order.

The Job Cost module contains four pricing methods: Fixed Bid, Time & Material, Cost Plus and Unit Cost. Phase field lengths can be up to 12 characters long and alphanumeric. The phase fields are also user-definable. You can easily track actual against estimates, and, when setting up a new job, you can enter estimates

manually or import them using the Esti-Link function. You can also set up draw

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equipment using a variety of methods. The Esti-Link module lets you import estimating

data from third-party applications. The Remote-Link lets you stay in touch with those in the field. Multi-state payroll is easily handled, and you can import payroll information directly using a variety of methods.

IMPORT/EXPORT/INTEGRATION — 5 Stars

Forefront is a completely integrated system. You can purchase the modules that fit your company type, and additional modules can be added in the future as needed. The Info-Link module provides access to Forefront data using third-party applications such as Microsoft Excel, Access and Word, as well as Crystal Reports. You can also export reports to a variety of applications by clicking on the export button found in the reporting screen.

SUPPORT & TRAINING — 5 Stars

Upon purchasing Forefront, a conversion manager is assigned to you who will assist you with setting up the information you need to get Forefront up and running. Training is available in one-week blocks, and supplemental telephone training is also available. Dexter + Chaney will also provide consulting for your business. A variety of product support and maintenance options are available once you purchase the product.

REPORTING — 5 Stars

Extensive reporting options are available in Forefront. Reports can be run from each module, with a list appearing when you click on the Reports tab. The reporting toolbar is found in all report setup screens and contains a variety of options including preview, print, filter and setup. The preview screen in Forefront provides you with several additional options including the option to export the report in a variety of formats including HTML, *.PDF, ODBC, and several

others. You can also export reports to Crystal Reports for further customization

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2006 Overall Rating — 5 Stars

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