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Soon the frame begins to look like a home, and eventually the painters arrive to paint the interior of each home, and appliances are delivered and installed.

Apr. 13, 2006

From the April/May 2006 Issue

When I look out my window, I see house after house being built. Every day, there are pipes placed in the ground to carry water and cables installed to provide electricity. Soon the frame begins to look like a home, and eventually the painters arrive to paint the interior of each home, and appliances are delivered and installed.

The point I'm trying to make is that the homebuilder, the plumbing contractor, the electrical contractor, and the service contractor all require the same thing — a way to track job expenses, labor and equipment costs. In short, they all need construction-related management software.

The level of detail involved in construction and related businesses far surpasses many other industries. Just one job requires a tremendous amount of paperwork, from bid to contract to budget to expenses to completion. A budget needs to be set up in order to properly track expenses, and labor needs to be properly expensed to each particular job. Licensing, workers compensation and insurance certificates need to be tracked. In the meantime, bills are due and your employees have to be paid.

What if you're an HVAC sales and repair business? You'll need to enter and track every piece of equipment you have in stock. You'll need to have an accurate maintenance history attached to every cooling system you have sold or worked on. And you'll need to have a service dispatching

system, where you can enter work orders, establish priorities and assign jobs

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differences between them. Some of these products would provide an excellent solution to small construction companies. Others would be terrific in a service-related environment, such as HVAC, plumbing and equipment repair. Some are excellent solutions for large companies such as builders/developers or large construction companies with millions of dollars in annual billings. Some of the products would be entirely at home in any of those environments. Others are more specialized.

The bottom line is that it depends on you — your likes and dislikes, your needs and your budget. It depends on what you're comfortable with. Or more importantly, what you're uncomfortable with. I'd advise you to also spend some time on the vendor web sites. Many offer instant demos of their products, or they will provide you with one at no cost. And remember that these reviews reflect one reviewer's opinion — my likes and dislikes. Hopefully, they'll also help you determine yours as well. □

[A-Systems Corp. — A-Systems](#)

[Job View](#)

A-Systems JobView – Version 6.0 is the latest release from A-Systems Corp. A-Systems is designed for construction companies of all sizes, and comes in three versions to suit even the smallest construction company. A strong Job Cost module makes this an excellent product for construction companies small and large.

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[Cougar Mountain Software —](#)

[Cougar Mountain Job Cost](#)

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Contractor V Plus from Contractor Software Corporation (CSC) has been supplying the construction industry with valuable software since 1978. Designed for contractors, construction companies, homebuilders and developers, Contractor V Plus is best suited for small to midsize companies.

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[Review](#)

[Dexter + Chaney — Forefront Construction Management 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.

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[Easy Street, Inc. — Total Office Manager](#)

Total Office Manager from Easy Street, Inc. is designed for small to midsize service-related companies, including appliance repair, plumbing, refrigeration, and HVAC repair. While it also will work for construction firms, its strength is in its service-related capabilities.

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Foundation Software, Inc. —

Foundation For Windows

Foundation for Windows construction accounting software is designed for labor-intensive contractors, including heavy construction, specialty trades and general contractors. Using SQL server, version 5.7 of Foundation for Windows is flexible enough to be suitable for companies large and small.

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Industry Specific Software,

Inc. — ISS Construction Manager

ISS Construction Manager – Version 6 from Industry Specific Software, Inc. (ISS) is designed for small to midsize construction companies. Add-on modules also make ISS an attractive product for service and warranty management.

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Intuit — Intuit Master Builder

Master Builder – Version 11 is the latest release of the product from Intuit. This construction industry software is a good fit for midsize construction related companies that desire the ease of an Intuit product...

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Intuit — QuickBooks Premier

Contractor Edition 2006

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is the latest version of this excellent construction-related software from MICS. Designed for construction companies of all sizes...

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[Maxwell Systems, Inc. — Maxwell Management Suite](#)

Maxwell Management Suite – Version 6.2 is the latest release of the product from Maxwell Systems, Inc. Designed for larger companies in the construction industry...

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[Maxwell Systems, Inc. — The American Contractor Enterprise Edition](#)

The American Contractor from Maxwell Systems Inc. is a business management software product designed for small to midsize construction contractors and service businesses.

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[Sage Software — Sage Timberline Office Desktop](#)

Sage Timberline Office, designed for the construction and real estate industries, serves a variety of large specialty and service contractors.

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Although this is the 2006 Construction Software review, the majority of the products that were reviewed in this issue are suitable for a variety of construction and construction related businesses such as custom homebuilders, subcontractors, HVAC contractors, Heavy Highway, and Equipment Repair businesses.

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