May. 27, 2008

*From the June/July Review of Small
Business Accounting Systems*

AME Software's Accounting Made Easy is a full suite of general small business accounting applications, providing GL, AP, AR, checkwriting, basic fixed asset depreciation and 1099 reporting. The company also offers an integrated payroll package that includes client payroll options, MICR check printing, e-filing of W-2s and 1099s, and direct deposit, with support for all states. AME's accounting system supports cash- and accrual-based methods and can be used to manage an unlimited number of businesses and subsidiaries while offering customizable departmental and consolidated reporting. The base AME system, with GL, AP and AR, costs $349 for a networkable site license, supporting all users in the same office. The company's Full Accounting Package, which adds payroll and MICR functions, costs $598. Each of the individual modules is also available separately. As well, the company has a wide base of users utilizing its payroll system, which starts at $249 as a stand-alone program.

Ease of Use/Basic Functionality — 4 Stars
AME offers basic guides during initial setup functions and provides wizards and general templates for creating charts of accounts. Within the program, the interface opens to a mostly blank work area with icon buttons across the top for accessing the program's primary modules along with buttons for accessing business, banking, departmental and vendor information. When selecting one of the major module areas, the icon buttons change to provide options related to that area. Within the AR module, for example, these buttons include options for Invoices, Payments, Customers, Customer Credit, Sales Items, Recurring Charges, Sales Taxes, Sales People and AR Setup. Additionally, pull-down menus offer

not offer the ability to see the customer name ... only their ID. When adding new invoices, however, the system does offer customer names in the search list provided on the transaction screen, while selection lists are also available for selecting inventory items. Neither sales items nor customers can be added "on the fly" from these invoice sheets; rather, the user must enter them through the Customers menu or the Sales Items menu. In general, the program provides a very easy-to-understand interface that offers quick access to the various modules and program features, though it lacks customization options.

Core Accounting/Security Functions — 3.5 Stars
As noted, AME's core financial management modules include GL, AP, AR, 1099 reporting, and payroll with direct deposit and electronic reporting. The program's receivables function provides some support for job costing through departmentalization, and the system can support any number of companies with unlimited vendors and departments. AME Accounting's GL also provides options for performing bank reconciliations, consolidating businesses and generating financial reports.

While it can manage a virtually unlimited number of items, the system is very limited in inventory capabilities, providing only listings of individual products as "sales items," with no support for multiple pricing, kits, assemblies, customer discounts or multiple warehouse locations. Through the AR system, the user can set other individual customer options, including one default sales tax rate, terms, credit limits, comments and multiple shipping locations. Additional tax rates can be added through the Sales Taxes function. When using credit limits, the system alerts the user when the limit is exceeded. Users can also set up recurring charges through AR and manage late fees.
The optional payroll system offers good internal payroll functions, with vacation and sick leave tracking, multiple taxing states, support for pre-tax benefit

deductions like 401(k)s, Simple IRAs or and cafeteria plans, and unlimited post-tax

comparative statements, balance sheets, cash flow, GL activity, check register, depreciation and trial balance, among others. AR reports include aging, credit balances, customer histories and sales by individual staff. For payables, users can generate aging, projections, histories and check registers. The system can output reports to PDF format and offers a built-in report customization tool, which allows changing basic layout such as headers, font and margins, but since it can also save to plain and rich text formats, most users will likely find editing reports in Word to be more intuitive. Reports can also be saved to HTML. In addition to 1099s from the payables module, the payroll module can produce forms W-2, W-3, 941, 940, 940EZ and 943.

Import/Export/Integration — 4 Stars
Data automatically flows between the primary module of the system, with transactions
posted to appropriate accounts. The optional payroll module also integrates seamlessly with the program. Reports can be saved into PDF, HTML, plain and rich text formats, the latter two being directly compatible with Microsoft Word. Users can import and convert data from DOS, but import/export with other third-party
programs is not offered, nor is export to spreadsheet formats. No remote access options are available.

Help & Support Options — 3 Stars
The program is easily learned and generally intuitive, and therefore should require minimal time for new users to get accustomed to. Since the system doesn't include a traditional Help menu or assistive features like right-click menus or tutorials, this is a good thing. A PDF user's manual is included. The company includes one year of unlimited technical support as part of its pricing and annual updates. (The company noted that interactive Help is available in

its Payroll program in most screens and that Help for other AME modules will

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