
Mun-Ease News

www.mun-ease.com

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Release 9.33 Ships!

New releases for our 8.0 and 9.0 customers

As our 8.0 and 9.0 customers have probably already noticed, this newsletter is accompanied with a CD-ROM. For our 32-bit customers, the CD-ROM contains the 9.33 release. For our 16-bit customers, the CD-ROM contains the 8.98 version. The CD-ROMs are shipped to our customers free-of-charge.

These CD-ROMs contain many new exciting enhancements. They are listed in the addendum to this newsletter. We're certain that you'll find them to be beneficial to your organization.

The 1999 User Group Meeting

The Mun-Ease user group meeting is held every year during the annual GFOA conference. This year, our user group meeting will be held in Nashville at the GFOA annual conference. We have tentatively scheduled the meeting at 3:00, Tuesday afternoon, May 25, 1999. Be sure to check the conference schedule for any last minute changes.

During the meeting, we will demonstrate upcoming enhancements and answer questions from our users. The meetings also provide an opportunity for our users to voice their opinions about enhancements that are important to them.

Also if you have time, stop by the software section of the GFOA booth. We'll have support personnel there to answer any questions that you may have.

In this issue...

<< release 9.33 features, our upgrade/support policy, classes, legislative news, and Windows NT tips.>>

1999 Mun-Ease Class Schedule

A primary mission of the GFOA is to enhance the professionalism of employees in the public sector. The GFOA takes great pride in the fact that its educational seminars are the primary source of continuing education for the vast majority of accounting and finance professionals in state and local governments.

Our Mun-Ease classes build upon this tradition of excellence. They are challenging, hands-on, and use real-life examples. We constantly improve them to ensure that they are relevant to seminar attendees.

In 1999, The GFOA will offer four Mun-Ease classes. Classes will be held at the GFOA headquarters in Chicago. Class size is limited to 15 students and is conducted by having the student solve real-life problems using Mun-Ease on a computer provided by the GFOA. The classes are 2 ^{1/2} days in length.

6/27/99-6/29/99 - Chicago
6/29/99-7/2/99 - Chicago (*overflow class*)
10/18/99-10/20/99 - Chicago
10/20/99-10/22/99 - Chicago (*overflow class*)

Our Support/Upgrade Policy

The GFOA and Prescient Software do not charge for telephone support nor do we charge for the interim updates that we periodically send to our customers.

We've adopted our support policy because we don't want our customers wasting hours of time trying to solve a problem when all it would take is a quick answer from an experienced support staff.

In addition to free telephone support, we also provide customers who use the current release of Mun-Ease with free interim updates. These updates occur about 2-3 times a year and include new enhancements, modifications requested by other users, and/or changes to comply with new legislative

initiatives. As we make modifications to the software, we post the latest revisions to the Mun-Ease web site. You can download these enhancements if you do not want to wait for the next interim update.

Approximately every 1^{1/2} to two years, we issue a new release of Mun-Ease for which we charge an upgrade fee. Each major release represents a fundamental change in system architecture of Mun-Ease and is accompanied by several significant enhancements and a new user guide. As always, the decision to upgrade to a new release is completely up to you; the user.

Our upgrade prices for the 9.0 release are approximately 33% of the regular Mun-Ease list price (67% discount). We recommend that you upgrade to our latest release so that you gain the full benefits of using Mun-Ease. Remember, when you upgrade to our current release (Mun-Ease 9.0), we'll provide free interim updates through the second quarter of year 2000.

Open Market Escrow Safe Harbor

The 9.33 release contains the text of the newly announced safe harbor for open market escrows. The file is called *EscrowSfHarbor.Pdf* and is installed in the Wmuni\PdfFiles folder. You can view/print these regulations using Adobe Acrobat.

In general, these new rules state that an open market escrow will be considered to have been purchased at fair market value if the issuer (a) receives three independent and bona fide bids for the purchase of the open market securities, (b) can demonstrate that the yield on the open market escrow was in excess of an escrow composed of SLGS as of the same day of purchase, and (c) the commissions on the purchase were the lesser of \$10,000 or .1% of the initial purchase price of the securities. The bids do not have to be in writing; however contemporaneous notes must be taken by the issuer or his agent about the bid. Also one bid must be from a major broker/dealer. See the GFOA newsletter for more details.

Tips: Windows NT Installation

Installing Mun-Ease under Windows NT is virtually the same as under Window 95/98. There are a few

differences though that relate to (a) the enhanced security features of NT and (b) NT's "hardware abstraction layer" which requires that the application program use drivers to communicate with any piece of hardware.

Because of the security features of NT, you will almost always need to install Mun-Ease under the "administrator" sign-on. Be sure that the user has full rights to all subdirectories under the "wmuni" directory (both on client and server if you are installing on a LAN). After installing Mun-Ease 9.xx, run *Regedt32*; select the *permissions* menu option; and grant everyone full access to the Hkey_Local_Machine | Software | Borland group. (Mun-Ease 9.xx communicates to ReportSmith 3.0 through the Registry.)

You'll also need to install the drivers for the hardware key. Select the *Windows NT Drivers Installation* menu option from the Mun-Ease 9.xx group. From the main menu of this program choose the *Functions | Install Sentinel Driver* menu option. Click Ok and then reboot your computer.

Windows NT Hardware Requirements

The hardware requirements for Windows NT are similar to those for Windows 95/98 with one key exception. That exception relates to the amount of memory that your computer must have. While Mun-Ease can run comfortably with 32 megabytes of memory in a Windows 95/98 environment, you probably will need at least 64 megabytes of memory under Windows NT. The need for additional memory is due to the fact that NT is a much larger operating system than its 95/98 counterpart.

New Releases for the BDE and ReportSmith

Mun-Ease 9.33 comes with a new version (5.01) of the Borland Database Engine (BDE). Also Strategic Reporting Systems (SRS) has announced a new release of ReportSmith. You can purchase this new version by calling SRS directly or through their

web site (www.srs.com). The phone number of SRS is (508)359-1333.

Addendum: About the CD-ROM

Version 8.98 (16-bit version)

We've enhanced several report specifications in the *Sizing* and *Refunding* modules. We reduced the point size in the body and page footers of several reports so that they will almost always fit on one page.

We've made some major enhancements to the arbitrage data entry screen. These enhancements are part of our effort to make the data entry process as easy as possible. We also updated the rebate transaction report (#27) to show the total number of transactions by group ID.

We added more flexibility to the copy and paste functions within the arbitrage transactions data entry windows.

We added an additional column of data to report #3. Report #3 now displays the accreted interest, total accreted interest, and accreted value for each coupon anniversary date. We corrected report specifications for reports 01e and 01f. In one case, they mistakenly displayed footer information that should not have been displayed. In the other case, the report selection criteria was incorrect.

The variable rate transaction report (#1g) now displays an additional column showing outstanding indebtedness over the life of the bond issue.

We've modified the combined indebtedness report to display an additional column of data that represents interest accreted on zero coupon bonds from the last coupon date. (Prior versions of Mun-Ease displayed both interest accrued and accreted from the last coupon date in the same column.) We corrected a bug on the combined indebtedness report that miscalculated the amount of variable rate interest accruing from the last coupon period.

We've added spin controls to the bond suffix edit box in the bond ID window.

We corrected a bug which caused uninitialized information to be displayed in the Descriptive Codes Window. *Background:* After we shipped release 8.92, we noticed a small problem with the Descriptive Codes Window that is displayed when you choose the File | Fixed Rate Bonds | New or Edit menu option.

The combo boxes in the first tab are not initialized until after you click on the second tab.

Version 9.33 (32-bit version)

General Enhancements

The 9.33 release now includes an enhanced version of the Borland Database Engine (release 5.01). Prior versions of Mun-Ease used the 4.5 version of the BDE.

We now provide the complete Mun-Ease user guide (700 pages) in Adobe Acrobat format. The setup program provides a menu option to install these PDF files to the Wmuni\PdfFiles directory on your hard disk.

We've modified all data entry screens that require you to enter the first month in a fiscal year. Mun-Ease will now default the value of this field to the value that you entered in the Setup | User Options | Edit menu option. (*all modules*)

Mun-Ease now has the ability to simultaneously compute a regular true interest cost (TIC) and an all-inclusive TIC. (Prior releases required that you compute one or the other.) We've also created a comparative yield report (report 56) which allows you to view on one page, the calculations for the TIC, All-In TIC and arbitrage yield limit. (*Base, Refunding, Sizing modules*)

We've enhanced several report specifications in the *Sizing* and *Refunding* modules. We reduced the point size in the body and page footers of several reports so that they will almost always fit on one page.

We now include the capability to compute credit enhancements for specific maturities. This capability is present in the base, sizing, and refunding modules. Credit enhancements can be computed based on gross debt service (debt service less accrued interest) or net debt service (debt service less accrued and gross capitalized interest). Note that with respect to this calculation, the accrued and gross capitalized interest are calculated for only those maturities for which credit enhancements are to be computed. (*Base, Refunding, Sizing modules*)

We've implemented a work-around that eliminates the "too many passwords" error message. This message relates to a

limitation within the Borland Database Engine with regard to the number of times that a database table can be opened during a user session.

Base Module

We added an additional column of data to report #3. Report #3 now displays the accreted interest, total accreted interest, accreted value for each coupon anniversary date. We corrected report specifications for reports 01e and 01f. In one case, they mistakenly displayed footer information that should not have been displayed. In the other case, the report selection criteria was incorrect.

The variable rate transaction report (#1g) now displays an additional column showing outstanding indebtedness over the life of the bond issue.

We've added several new calculation options to the File | Notes menu option. Mun-Ease can now calculate interest for a note using the simple interest method, U.S. rule, or according to normal bond conventions. The interest calculations will also accommodate odd stub or tail periods. Note that these conventions are commonly used by banks and finance companies when they finance municipalities for equipment or lease sales.

We've modified the spin control on the Bond ID window. It will now increment or decrement alpha or numeric values. Prior versions of Mun-Ease worked only with alpha values.

Arbitrage Module

We have now automated the process of determining if the arbitrage yield limit of a bond issue must be computed under the provisions for deep discount term bonds (Section 148-4(b)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code. We provide a report (#57a) which documents the computations that we perform. *Note:* We also plan to implement in the near future, the arbitrage yield limit calculation for yield-to-call bonds. This feature will be implemented after we get a clarification of Section 148-4(b)(3). In anticipation of this upcoming feature, we've added a new column within the call options data grid. This column allows you to enter the earliest date of call for a maturity.

We've made some major enhancements to the arbitrage data entry screen. These enhancements are part of our effort to make the data entry process as easy as possible. We also updated the rebate transaction report (#27) to show the total number of transactions by group ID.

We added more flexibility to the copy and paste functions within the arbitrage transactions data entry windows.

We've added two new security types (*MMKT* and *Other*) to the bond calculator. With these two new security types, you can now view all of your rebate transactions within the Arbitrage | Investment View data grid.

Refunding Module

We've enhanced the transferred proceeds penalty routines. Previously, we created a report which could be used to verify the transfer amounts and penalty calculations. In this release, we provide options to update the rebate transactions in both the refunded and refunding issues based on the transfer percentages.

We added a button to the refunding report options page to print all or none of the reports.

We now include the full text of the recent open market safe harbor regulations that were contained in the Federal Register. The file is called *EscrowSfHarbor.PDF* and is located in your *Wmuni\PdfFiles* folder. It can be viewed with the Adobe Acrobat reader.

We've changed the panel below the call options window. It now displays the total of called bonds at par value and at their call price.

As mentioned earlier in the *General Enhancements* section, we have made several modifications that relate to the Refunding module. They are (a) the ability to calculate both a regular and all-inclusive TIC, (b) the ability to calculate credit enhancements on specific maturities specified by the user, (c) modifications to report formats to enable most reports to be printed on one page, and (d) the creation of a comparative yield report (report 56) which allows you to view on one page, the calculations for the TIC, All-In TIC and arbitrage yield limit.

Stand-Alone Reporting

We've modified the combined indebtedness report to display an additional column of data that represents interest accreted on zero coupon bonds from the last coupon date. (Prior versions of Mun-Ease displayed both interest accrued and accreted from the last coupon date in the same column.) We corrected a bug on the combined indebtedness report that miscalculated the amount of variable rate interest accruing from the last coupon period.

Sizing Module

As mentioned earlier in the *General Enhancements* section, we have made several modifications that relate to the Sizing module. They are (a) the ability to calculate both a regular and all-inclusive TIC, (b) the ability to calculate credit enhancements on specific maturities specified by the user, (c) modifications to

report formats to enable most reports to be printed on one page, and (d) the creation of a comparative yield report (report 56) which allows you to view on one page, the calculations for the TIC, All-In TIC and arbitrage yield limit.

Allocations Module

We now provide an option to minimize the onscreen displays while generating maturity-by-maturity allocation reports. Choosing this option will significantly improve the processing time (33-50% reduction).

We've added new print selection criteria to the allocation reports. You can now print allocation reports for any combination of funds, allocation entity, sub-entity, and/or project.

We've modified the data entry screen for gross debt service allocations. Mun-Ease now allows you to enter a dollar amount or percentage values. If you enter a dollar amount, Mun-Ease will calculate the allocation percentage for you. **Note:** If you wish to modify an existing allocation by entering a new dollar amount, you must first zero-out the existing percentage. Otherwise Mun-Ease will recalculate the dollar amount based on the percentage that you previously entered.