



Extensions Newsletter

Accubid's informative and educational newsletter for contractors

May, 2010

Editor's Message

The day is fast approaching when BIM will be the standard practice on construction projects. Find the answers to your BIM questions (and more) at the 2010 Accubid Conference. The 2010 Accubid Conference features streams on BIM, Estimating, Project Management, and Service Management with a strong variety of technical and educational sessions in each. The Accubid Conference is a premier industry event you shouldn't miss. Go to www.accubidconference.com for more information.

Industry Insights

Protecting Profits in This Economic Climate

By Ron King, Vice President, Business Development

Protecting profits continues to be the name of the game in this economic climate. The past couple of articles I've written centered on maximizing fabrication opportunities. I'd like to explore another possible way to keep money on that ever shrinking bottom line.

I'm sure you've received the phone call when the owner states "I need to inform you that the equipment I ordered is not going to arrive when I originally stated". Or the general contractor states "You'll need to move your crews out of this area for the next two weeks due to....."

Identifying schedule impacts on the jobsite are sometimes hard to do and quantifying them can be just as challenging. One way to help you substantiate your claim is to submit a schedule with your original bid. This doesn't need to be a full blown, man-loaded, CPM schedule, but could be as simple as a bar chart schedule. The schedule needs to display the date(s) owner-supplied equipment is intended to arrive. They can easily be shown as "milestones" which clearly display the equipment arrival date(s) upon which your bid was predicated.

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2010
Las Vegas, Nevada
May 24-26

The Specialist

Accubid Conference 2010: BIM, Accubid Enterprise and More!

By Al Ricci, Chief Sales & Services Officer, Co-President

By the time this article goes to press, the 2010 edition of the Accubid Conference will be less than three weeks away. Conference 2010 features a few significant milestones for Accubid. It's our fifth annual conference after more than a decade of conference dormancies, it takes place during our 25th anniversary year, and it features

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Trainer's Corner

Understanding Breakdowns and Attributes – Part 1

By John Barrett, Instructor

To effectively manage any collection of information, it's important to store items where they belong and in a logical manner. The same principle exists in estimating. In Accubid Enterprise, there are several areas in which we can store our takeoff information.

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Extensions is published monthly by Accubid Systems Inc. as a service to the contracting industry. For further information or assistance, please contact us:

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Industry Insights

Protecting Profits in This Economic Climate

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A contractor recently submitted a bid to install owner-supplied equipment which was to be mounted in modular towers. The owner stated the intended arrival date of the modules during the pre-bid, but the date was not mentioned in the documentation. All the foundation work was complete and the contractor ordered a Manitowoc 2250 crawler crane to be assembled by the date the equipment was to arrive. The afternoon before the arrival date, the contractor received a call stating the modules were being held up by wide-load permits due to road construction in the south. This eventually turned into a two-week delay problem. The end result was a crane sitting idle during this period and manpower that had to be reassigned to another jobsite. Now began the cost of the delay fight with the owner.

If a bar chart schedule had been submitted with the original bid, identifying the date the modules were to arrive, substantiating the claim would be easier. And if the contractor had taken the time to submit a schedule, it would have been very easy to show the as-planned versus actual arrival dates and how the delay effected manpower reassignment and equipment rental costs. Instead a battle ensued about the verbal delivery dates stated during the pre-bid meeting.

Another contractor had crews working on a commercial project when the general contractor stated the walls weren't going up as fast as planned and he needed to move his manpower to a different area of the jobsite. This clearly interrupted his planned activities and required

the foreman to redirect the manpower to another area. Additionally, the foreman was impacted because material and tools were needed for the new area. This fire drill also impacted the purchasing and trucking departments to deliver the material and tools to keep the craft going in the new area. Again, had a simple bar chart schedule been submitted with the bid showing the activities and their durations, this impact would have been easier to quantify.

Another contractor had purchased rooftop equipment from a vendor who promised delivery by a certain date. Once the delivery date came closer, the vendor called stating the dates had slipped. The equipment finally arrived two weeks late. The contractor had used a purchase contract when ordering the equipment, but the delivery dates were not referenced in the contract. The purchase contract is a binding agreement between the contractor and the vendor, but the missing delivery date became crucial in settling the delay claim.

As you can see, delivery dates shown on a simple bar chart schedule submitted with the bid could have mitigated the first two contractors' risk. And properly referencing the delivery date in the purchase contract would have helped in the other case. These simple suggestions can help protect your bottom line especially when times are tough.

Illustration by Angelo Katsaros

The Specialist

Accubid Conference 2010: BIM, Accubid Enterprise and More!

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some key product previews, most notably the first public glimpse of Accubid's BIM strategy, and the first industry preview of Accubid Enterprise Estimating Version 5.

We're proud to see our Conference grow year over year. When we relaunched our Conference five years ago, it was with the intention of delivering the premier industry education, training, and networking event for specialty contractors of all shapes and sizes. After five years, and a lot of hard work from some very dedicated people, we're seeing that vision become a reality. Conference 2010 is our first event to feature formalized, dedicated streams on Estimating, Project Management, and Service

The Specialist

Accubid Conference 2010: BIM, Accubid Enterprise and More!

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Management. We've scheduled the streams to allow you to either specialize in one area, or sample each over the course of the Conference. Each key stream features educational sessions that explore and share best practices, and product preview sessions to give you an insider's glimpse of the productivity tools Accubid is building to help your business. We're also very excited to introduce a new stream on Building Information Modeling (BIM).

I can't tell you how many times we've been contacted by clients asking us "what is BIM?" or "we've been awarded a BIM project, where do we start?". Accubid's BIM stream not only features previews of our tools, but a multi-module BIM educational program based on the AGC's industry leading BIM 101 program. The AGC has really been on the forefront of Building Information Modeling education, launching the BIM 101 program in April 2009, the first-of-its-kind educational program designed to give construction professionals a broad understanding of the BIM process. BIM is one of the most exciting developments in the construction industry, and is really changing the way projects are built. This emerging process requires new mindsets and technological processes to move the industry forward. This program, developed in conjunction with leading BIM practitioners, technology firms and educators, is designed to successfully educate construction professionals at all experience levels on a range of topics they would encounter implementing and using a BIM. The AGC BIM 101 program is a \$450 value when attended via an AGC event, but it's part of the Conference 2010 at no additional cost. We're excited to be able to deliver this program as only Accubid could. We're also excited to provide the first ever public glimpse of Accubid's BIM product strategy.

During the Conference 2009 keynote, Accubid laid out our vision for our total solution platform, Accubid Enterprise. With Accubid Enterprise, we're delivering the industry's first and only software solution to help manage the construction project life-cycle. Gone will be the days of fragmented software solutions that rely on push-pull technology to share data between the different phases of the construction project life-cycle. With Enterprise,



Accubid introduces the concept of a "project"; once created, you'll produce the estimate, and the data will be available in the different modules you'll use to manage the project, from change orders to document tracking. We take it one step further with multi-trade (electrical, mechanical, etc.) support. Accubid Enterprise is built on industrial strength Microsoft .NET and SQL Server technology, with the elegance only Accubid could deliver. Enterprise grows as your business grows, in both size and scope. During the Conference 2010 keynote, we'll preview Accubid Enterprise Estimating Version 5, the first edition of the estimating module that delivers native support for multiple trades, including electrical.

Mandalay Bay Hotel & Casino has been a great partner in helping us deliver what we feel will be the best event experience we've ever provided. From its great location, luxurious rooms, variety of entertainment options, and choice of fine dining, we couldn't have selected a better location for Conference 2010. Mandalay Bay offers some of the most unique experiences on the planet — all without the expense of an around-the-world trip. At \$749 for Conference Only access or \$1099 for the Conference+Hotel bundle (both including two great meals plus snacks per day), and with flights into Las Vegas for less than \$400, Conference 2010 is an incredible value, in a phenomenal location, at an unbeatable price.

If you haven't registered yet, Conference Only access is still available, and will be available until May 21, 2010. Conference+Hotel bundles are almost sold out, so I'd like to encourage you to register today if you've been delaying the decision. All of us at Accubid look forward to seeing you in Las Vegas for what will be the premier industry event.

Illustration by Angelo Katsaros

Trainer's Corner

Understanding Breakdowns and Attributes – Part 1

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To add or modify any one of the breakdown categories, simply click on the pertinent button, as shown below.

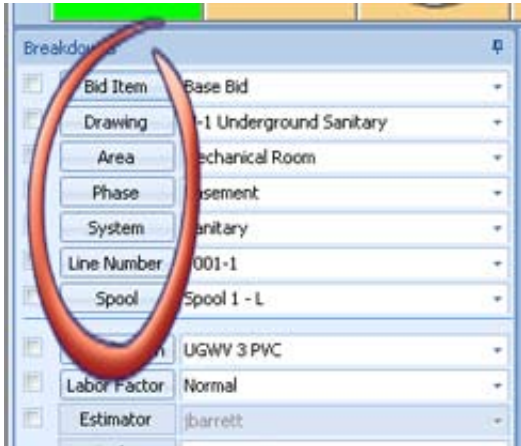


Fig. 1

For this example, click **Bid Item** and type in the information as needed.

Bid Item is the breakdown in which you would typically store all takeoffs pertaining to your base bid. It is also the place where you could manage any separate or breakout pricing (e.g. Tenant Fit Out).



Fig. 2

We're all aware of the importance of document management. By clicking on the **Drawing** button, you're opening up the Breakdown Definition window in which all project specific drawings can be stored. By simply highlighting the first available line and typing in the drawing name and even the description as it might appear in the title block of your blueprint, you effectively capture the drawing title information allowing you to

allocate takeoff accordingly.

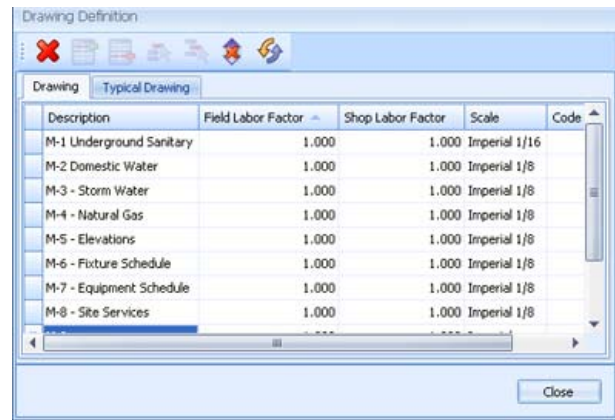


Fig. 3

The **Area** button represents another important breakdown to include in your takeoff. It affords you the flexibility in allocating labor and materials to different areas of the job. For example, labor for all pipe and fittings in Slab might be factored differently than labor for pipe and fittings in a Riser Shaft. Using the Area breakdown, you can very easily adjust and account for your labor for both areas quickly and efficiently.

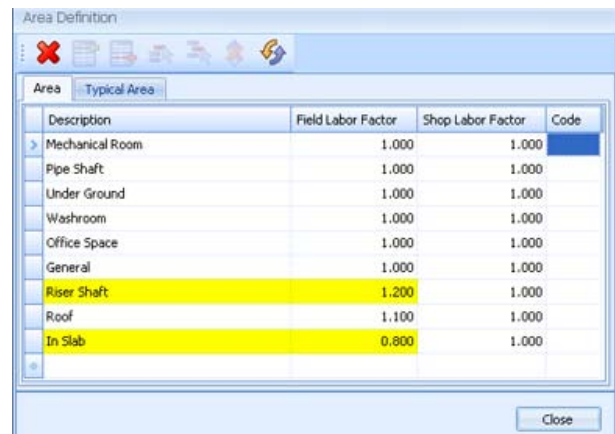


Fig. 4

Phase can be synonymous with floors or levels. While you can certainly break your job up into phases, it is very common to also break it down by floor. This is where you would create the different levels of the project as they relate to storeys or floors. Clearly, the higher you need to build, the more of an impact you can expect on your field labor factoring.

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Trainer's Corner

Understanding Breakdowns and Attributes – Part 1

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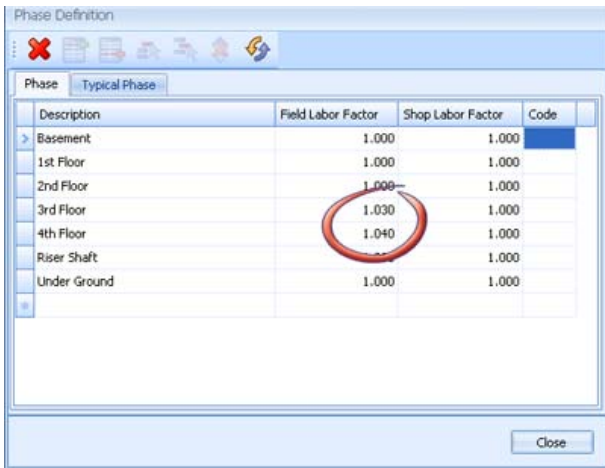


Fig. 5

One of the most commonly used breakdowns is **System**. Being able to take off similar pipe and fittings and allocating those materials to different systems will help with ordering materials. For example, often piping materials and joining methods are similar for both Storm and Sanitary systems. It becomes very apparent very quickly that being able to separate these material quantities by system can be a very important project management tool.

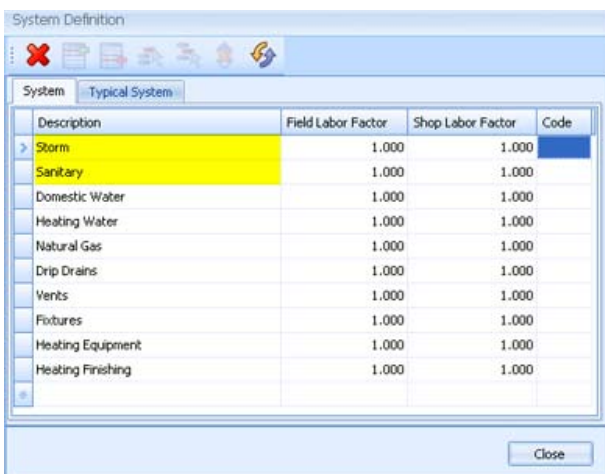


Fig. 6

When using Piping and Instrumentation diagrams for takeoff, many times certain process piping systems will have a line number attached to them. One system, for example, may carry on onto several different diagrams, and to effectively track them, a number is assigned. Using **Line Number**, you can track all the information on

your P & IDs, helping to eliminate any inherent risk of losing track or even forgetting a pipe line or system.

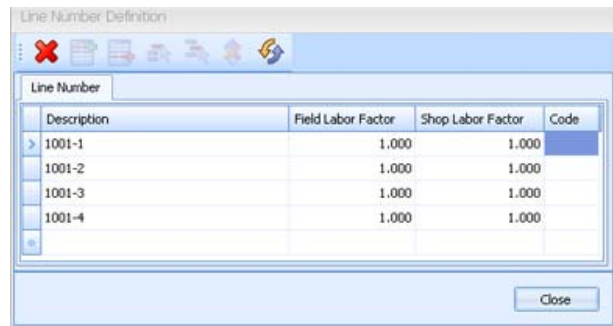


Fig. 7

You can use the **Spool** breakdown to help you keep track of just that. Typically found in more industrial settings, spool pieces are normally used for joining pipeline systems or to handle thermal expansion. The installation of these sometimes very large and heavy pieces can carry some unique labor attributes and therefore have more risk associated with them.



Fig. 8

It becomes more apparent as you begin to apply breakdowns to the various areas of takeoff how much functionality you can create on the back end of your estimate. The flexibility you create by following these steps will provide your project management team with invaluable progress-tracking tools and report functions.

Professional Development

Accubid offers a wide range of courses that teach the novice or seasoned estimator or project manager the principles and methodology of estimating with the aid of a computer.

Faced with the on-going shortage of qualified estimators, many contractors are increasingly choosing to train their own employees to become estimators. Many companies are also opting to send their entire estimating departments to our courses as a means of standardizing their estimating practices. This translates into efficiency, productivity and profitability.

If you're considering either of these options, we can help. Accubid's Education division offers a 5-day estimating course, specifically designed to teach estimators the principles and methodologies of modern day estimating. You can take this course on its own or as part of the 3-course Computerized Estimating Certification program, Accubid's accreditation program for estimators. For information on this and other courses, visit our website at www.accubid.com.

If you register early for any Level 100 Estimating course, you'll receive \$100 (US) off the price of the course. To qualify, you must register at least 30 days prior to the scheduled date.

Upcoming Courses

June 7-June 11
Mechanical Computerized Estimating Level 100 Course
Toronto, ON

July 26-July 30
Mechanical Computerized Estimating Level 100 Course
Denver, CO

Product Training

Accubid software training labs have proven to be one of the more cost-effective ways to improve the efficiency and productivity of your staff. And private labs—conducted in-house or at a location of your choice—have proven to be a popular method of conducting training labs because of savings in travel costs and time, and the possibility of customizing the lab.

In addition to our private labs, we also offer training in classroom facilities across North America and over the Internet via our Web-based labs. Accubid's estimating software labs are available at both beginner and advanced levels.

Upcoming Labs

May 17-May 18
Mechanical Estimating - Fundamentals - 2 Day
Denver, CO

May 19-May 20
Mechanical Enterprise Estimating - Fundamentals
Denver, CO

May 21-May 21
Mechanical Enterprise Manager - Fundamentals
Denver, CO

June 22-June 23
Mechanical Enterprise Estimating - Fundamentals
Denver, CO

June 24-June 24
Mechanical Enterprise Manager - Fundamentals
Denver, CO

June 28-June 29
Mechanical Enterprise Estimating - Fundamentals
Toronto, ON

For pricing, or to sign up, call: 1-800-222-8243
or e-mail: education@accubid.com
For further information and course details, please visit the education section of the Accubid web site www.accubid.com
or call us at 1-800-222-8243



Building Long-Term Relationships

For over 25 years, we've been in the business of helping specialty contractors like you grow their business. We're not only committed to your success today, we're keeping our eye on the future to better assist you tomorrow.

We do this by bringing the right estimating, project management and service management software solutions to your business. So you see, whether you are a small family-owned business or a large multi-location corporate giant, let's talk. We have the tools, the expertise, and the vision that can help you succeed. So far 5,000 companies seem to agree...

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