



# Extensions Newsletter

Accubid's informative and educational newsletter for contractors

June, 2010

## Editor's Message

The 2010 Accubid Conference – held May 24-26 in Las Vegas – was a tremendous success. With sessions and streams revolving around BIM, Estimating, Project Management and Service, our clients upgraded their skills and knowledge, and took a glimpse into the future with a preview of Accubid Enterprise in action. The 2010 conference website is still up and can be used to add your name to the mailing list for information on the 2011 Accubid Conference. Visit [www.accubidconference.com](http://www.accubidconference.com) to sign up. For those clients that did attend, check your inbox for the survey link so that you can weigh in on what you would like to see at future conferences. If you did not receive the link, please contact Carole Filion at [cfilion@accubid.com](mailto:cfilion@accubid.com).

## Industry Insights

### BIM and its Impact in the Field

By Giovanni Marcelli, Founder and CEO, Accubid Systems

Creating a virtual (digital) model first and then building the actual project is quickly becoming the new approach to construction. Some contractors have already experienced this new paradigm; many more will in the foreseeable future.

Putting together a virtual model requires new skills and the collaborative effort from a team of experts, the design consultants, key trade contractors, the general contractor, the suppliers, and the owner. A virtual model can be built for a reasonable amount of money

and it can be easily modified. On projects of some complexity, the savings in overall project construction outweighs the cost of virtual modeling, and these savings increase proportionally with the complexity of the project.

The BIM approach is proactive, offers some great benefits and produces positive results because all the planning is done before the actual building process starts and in great detail. Problems that would normally surface during the

*continued on pg.2*



**2010**  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
May 24-26

## The Specialist

### Accubid Conference 2010: A Look Back at the Future

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

"Wow", "that's amazing", "revolutionary, just revolutionary" – these were some of the comments we heard after the unveiling of Accubid Enterprise Estimating Version 5.0, the estimating module that's part of the Accubid Enterprise platform, during the keynote presentation at the 2010 edition  
*continued on pg.3*

## Trainer's Corner

### Understanding Breakdowns and Attributes – Part 2

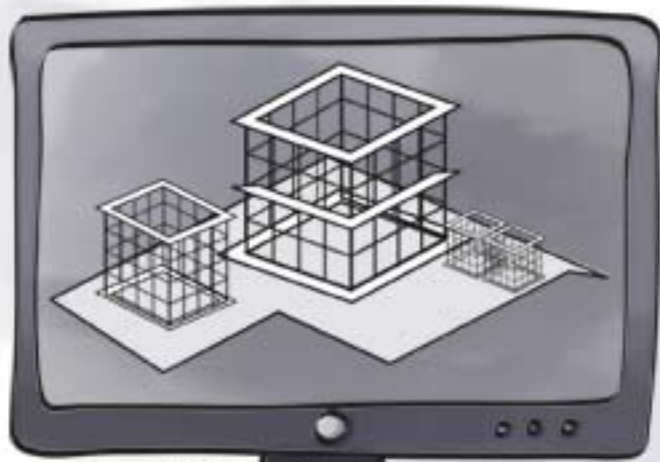
By John Barrett, Instructor

Last month, we looked at managing breakdown categories in Accubid Enterprise. This month's article addresses takeoff attributes.

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- Editorial: (905) 695-4927 • Product Support: 1-800-361-3030
- Education: 1-800-222-8243 • Sales Representatives: 1-800-222-8243



## Industry Insights

### BIM and its Impact in the Field

*cont'd from pg. 1*

construction stage and cause costly changes and delays will be uncovered and resolved while building the model. Furthermore, the owners have a much better appreciation for how the building will look and what will contain; consequently, there will be fewer changes and fewer disruptions during the construction phase.

In this article, I would like to focus on the impact of BIM on the field people working with the model.

Tradesmen are accustomed to working with paper drawings that have been internally detailed during the pre-construction planning. While paper drawings will continue to be used in the field, a lot of the details will be residing in the model, and it will become necessary to access the information from a computer on an ongoing basis. The foreman will have to become very proficient with the software to access the model and extract the

information required to build the project in compliance with the virtual model.

On the positive side, the model will have the information required to build the project readily available, along with the ability to see the virtual model in great details before executing the work. Consequently, the field people will be better equipped to perform productively and experience less confusion and fewer changes.

Once we learn how to work with the digital model, everything should be much easier and faster; however, becoming proficient with the modeling software is going to take some time and some effort.

What products will we need to learn? Are they easy and user friendly? Are our current foremen up to the task? These are the obvious questions that come to mind.

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# Industry Insights

## BIM and its Impact in the Field

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This new approach to building projects requires changes in the current legislation to fully define the responsibilities of the engineer, as compared to the contractor's responsibilities, and determine who owns the model.

When changes become necessary, it will require a true collaborative and online system that will allow the team to work together to update the virtual model. Ensuring that the model does not change without the contractor knowledge and approval is going to be of paramount importance.

Ideally, we should be working on a live model that contains all approved changes, but then, how do we control the changes?

Changes should be much less frequent because during the virtual model creation time, the owners have had to decide what they wanted and the engineers will have had the time to document it in the model. Another benefit for everyone is that when changes occur, there will be a much greater sense of urgency in getting them approved to avoid confusion in the project.

The digital model brings a new dimension to the project schedule. Not only we will be able to see the timeline, but we will be able to see how the project was supposed to progress as compared to the actual progress. It is mind boggling to just think of how much information can be available at the click of the mouse.

Owners will know how much work was done to date and what percentage of completion has been actually achieved. Scheduling will grow to a greater dimension. The schedule will be able to display the project planned status at any time as well as the actual project status.

As soon as the installed data is inputted, the model will display the project's latest completion information. Many things will be much easier and the project documentation will be at the highest level with the least amount of effort. As long as we input the daily data, we will be able to extract the productivity rate and completion percentage easily and accurately.

It is quite a different process, but one that can make the

project a lot more efficient and much more productive, and drive the projects' completion dates shorter and shorter.

Organizing the project properly will be imperative, more so because the timeline will be gradually shortened and we are going to be expected to work like a clock. Everyone's expectation from a performance perspective will be heightened and those contractors that cannot work at the faster pace will lose out.

But we are still left with a number of unanswered questions.

- How do we prepare for this?
- When is it going to truly hit us?
- Are my people up to the task?
- Do I need new blood?
- What kind of new people do I need?

These are all good and very relevant questions that we will gradually answer in future articles. Meanwhile, we are planning and designing the software tools that our clients will need to extract the material quantity from the model as we are currently doing with cadLive from the DWG files (CAD native drawings).

*Illustration by Angelo Katsaros*

# The Specialist

## Accubid Conference 2010: A Look Back at the Future

*cont'd from pg. 1*



of the Accubid Conference. Accubid Enterprise Estimating was not only the cornerstone of the Conference keynote, but of the entire Conference itself.

In keeping with Accubid's long standing reputation for innovation, Accubid Enterprise Estimating Version 5.0 delivers a wide range of industry firsts. It's the first multi-trade estimating solution, supporting electrical, ITS, and mechanical trades out of the box. It's the first native 64-bit system, taking full advantage of today's advanced Windows 7 operating system and 64-bit computing architecture. It's the industry's first true complete multi-user system, supporting not just multi-user takeoff, but multi-user support throughout the entire estimate. Leveraging Microsoft SQL Server and .NET, Accubid Enterprise is the first and only solution that marries these advanced technologies with the elegance only Accubid can deliver.

But before I get too ahead of myself, let's take a look back at Conference 2010 itself. We started with our opening reception and registration the evening of May 23 at the Mandalay Bay Convention Center. Clients had an opportunity to network with Accubid industry experts, business leaders and their peers. The Conference itself got underway the morning of May 24 with opening keynote, kicked off by Accubid founder and CEO Giovanni Marcelli, who unveiled Accubid Enterprise Estimating Version 5.0. Mark Mandarelli, Accubid Chief Technology & Products Officer, and Co-President, took the crowd through a technical product demonstration that knocked everyone's socks off. Accubid Enterprise Version 5.0 will be released

October 2010, but for the attendees, the release cannot come soon enough with many asking how they could get Enterprise today.

What followed post keynote was three days of education, technical, and product sessions focused on Building Information Modeling (BIM), Estimating, Product Management, and Service Management, with more than two dozen sessions over the three days. These sessions were sprinkled with peer networking and hands-on technology test drive opportunities in the Accubid Tech Center, and social activities to explore the fun side of Las Vegas, including an amazing experience at Cirque du Soleil's The Beatles Love. Rather fitting as the Conference theme organically evolved to a sense of positive revolution with attendees gravitating to the sessions focused on Accubid Enterprise Estimating.

The Conference closed with our first executive panel question and answer, staffed by Accubid's product, industry, and business leaders. Attendees had an opportunity to discuss what they had seen over the course of the Conference, and pose questions directly to the individuals at Accubid who manage product, service and company direction.

One of the most interesting comments I heard during this closing session was that Accubid needed to do a more effective job of marketing the annual Conference. Many of our attendees did not fully appreciate the tremendous amount of educational and technical resources, insider glimpse at future Accubid products, and peer network opportunities provided at the Conference. All this, and a world-class facility in a world class location for less than the cost of a cup of coffee per day. We're committed to helping get the word out so the Conference can continue to grow, and the value we provide to our clients and the industry will continue to expand. We're just under a month away from announcing preliminary plans for Conference 2011, and we're looking at more ways to get the message out that it's the must attend industry event of the year.

*Illustration by Angelo Katsaros*

# Trainer's Corner

## Understanding Breakdowns and Attributes – Part 2

cont'd from pg. 1

**Attributes** in Accubid

Enterprise refers to different variables which, when activated, affect the installation of various materials such as pipe, valves, and fittings.

Several attribute options allow specific automatic takeoff to be performed when taking off an item. Pipe may require several options depending on the specification, location of the work within the job, and preferences of the company doing the takeoff.

Automatics add elements or parts to a takeoff based on the item being taken off.

When an automatic option is checked, it indicates specific additional items will be taken off with the main item. In the example above, Hangers, Insulation, and Joints will be added to a pipe takeoff. It is important to note: all the options must be defined in the current specification for the chosen items to be resolved correctly.

Automatic Cuts is used primarily with a digitizer board. Activating this feature allows one cut per segment of pipe. For example, if the standard length of pipe you're taking off is 21' long and the segment you've taken off is 25 feet, then one cut will be accounted for. Alternatively, if you choose to not activate Automatic Cuts, you have the ability to count your pipe cuts separately.

Please note this feature is not available in LiveCount at this time.

When handling Insulation, Joints, Paint, and Tracing, it



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

is important to note that any of the materials for which these Automatics are checked must be in the active specification to which they belong. For example, you will get a resolution error if you have Insulation checked and you've taken off piping in a Natural Gas spec. This happens because you typically wouldn't have insulation on a Natural Gas line and therefore no insulation would appear in the spec.

Hanger options give the estimator control when automatic hangers are checked.

Depending on the detail of the specification you're using, options may include several types of hangers used in conjunction with multiple labor types (Figure 4) and upper attachment options (Figure 5).

In the following examples, we are choosing from two different types of Hangers (Figure 4), seven different Labor Types (Figure 5), and five different Attachment options (Figure 6).

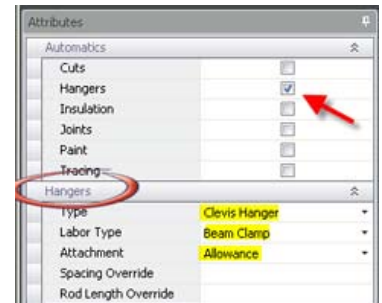


Fig. 3

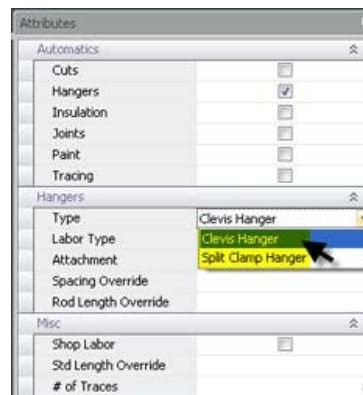


Fig. 4

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# Trainer's Corner

## Understanding Breakdowns and Attributes – Part 2

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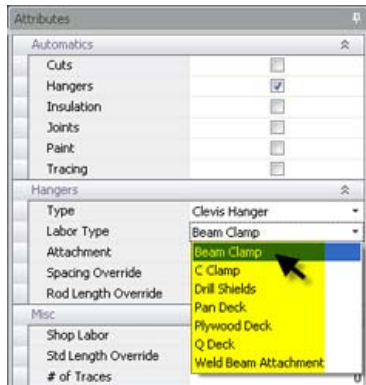


Fig. 5

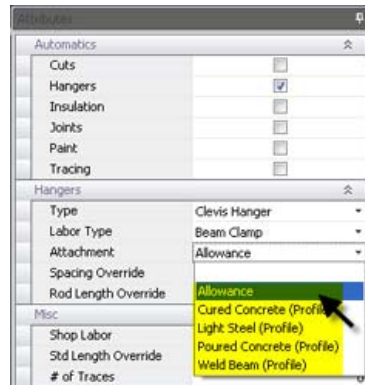


Fig. 6

Each option carries with it a unique labor and material value, and gives you the flexibility to handle each installation method separately.

Spacing is based on the pipe selected in the specification but can be overwritten based on support availability like racks or joist spacing. Be sure to zero out the Spacing Override field once you wish to return to your default hanger spacing.

The length of rod needed to support your hanger is also defined in your specification. A typical length is 3 feet but can be changed permanently in your spec. If you need to adjust your hanger rod length on the fly to accommodate a 'one off' elevation difference for a determined section of pipe, simply input the required length in the Rod Length Override field. Be sure to zero out the Rod Length Override field once you wish to return to your default hanger rod length.

Miscellaneous options enable labor from takeoffs to be allocated to the Shop Labor screen, override the standard measure of pipe length in the specification, and determine the number of trace wires required if tracing is selected in Automatics.

Once the attributes are set, the options you've selected will apply to all items taken off going forward and will appear at the bottom of your audit trail.

## 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](http://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

July 26-July 30

Mechanical Computerized Estimating Level 100 Course  
Denver, CO

January 24-January 28

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.

## Labs in June

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

June 30-June 30

Mechanical Enterprise Manager - Fundamentals  
Toronto, ON

For pricing, or to sign up, call: 1-800-222-8243  
or e-mail: [education@accubid.com](mailto:education@accubid.com)

For further information and course details, please visit the education section of the Accubid web site [www.accubid.com](http://www.accubid.com)  
or call us at 1-800-222-8243



# Building Long-Term Relationships

For over 23 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...

***"Designed by contractors  
for contractors, Accubid's  
software solutions work the  
way you do"***

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