

## LSG Hours for the Holidays



Be sure to check your forms stock and order before Dec. 15th if you think you will need them in early January.

We will be closed for the **Christmas & New Year Holiday** starting Noon on December 22nd, and will reopen at 8 A.M., January 2nd, 2007.

Because the office will be closed during that time, paper and other products will not be shipped and only limited "emergency support" will be available. **Please remember that "emergency support" is not covered under any pre-paid phone plans and is available by credit card only.** (Visa and MasterCard only.) ■

## Important Year-End Procedures

The end of the year is nearly upon us and that means it will soon be time to reset year to date totals to zero. **The time to perform this function is in January (after you have closed December, but before closing January).** The following describes how:

**DOS Users:** Start at the Main Menu and select 3 for Maintenance Menu. Next, select 3 to "Reset YTD totals to 0." Finally, answer "Y" to set the totals to zero.

**Lab Manager 2000 Users:** Start at the Main Menu and click on "Utility Menu." At the Utility Menu, click on "Year End." Finally, click on "Reset Year to Date Totals."

**Version 6 Users:** There is nothing that needs to be done. ■

## Version 6 Shipments Continue

Shipping of the Lab Manager Version 6 Billing and Production modules continues. We have been very careful not to ship Version 6 to everyone at once. This would overwhelm our support department and we wanted to make sure we didn't have any hidden bugs lurking inside the program. As of the time of this writing, there are over one hundred Version 6 programs in circulation. Some bugs found during the initial release caused additional delays to fix and there were some features that were missing that we are working hard to add. In spite of these few set-backs, there have been rave reviews about the new program.



The following comment about Version 6 came to us via our User Forum;

*"I'm using it and love it. It's much more customizable and utilizes your computer resources much more efficiently/effectively. There are several "modules" and not all of them are available at the moment. I think scheduling is due out next. The layout is completely different but doesn't take long to know the program. I started from scratch and entered all new products, materials, accounts, etc. since I had some 15+ years worth of "full service lab" items and didn't need half the products/materials/accounts (since I'm fixed prosthetics only, now, and fewer accounts).*

*"If you're using LM5 (or previous), upgrade to LM6. It's worth it." Fred L., Topeka, KS.*

## 2006 Summer Fast Track Class

The 2006 Fast Track class was a huge success. Users from all across the country came to Phoenix to learn more about our new Version 6 program.

The one day class started in the morning with the basics, discussing the differences between Version 5 and Version 6, entering and locating cases; we demonstrated the use of the new tax jurisdiction reporting and much more.

In the afternoon we discussed some of Version 6's more advanced features like using relative products, multiple price lists, the QuickBooks interface, and customizing reports using Ver-



sion 6's powerful report generator. A lot of material was covered and questions were answered as we went along. A number of users brought their laptop computers and followed along as we presented the information.

Each attendee was asked to fill out a questionnaire at the end of the class to rate various aspects of the class. All of the attendees, who filled out the form, wrote they enjoyed the class and learned something. Also, everyone said they would recommend the class to others.

One attendee wrote; *"This is my first class. I loved everything about it! The ability to network will benefit me and the lab greatly! Thanks for all that you do! I am excited about the program and what it can [do now] and will become!"*

### Need to Reserve a Copy of V6?

If you haven't signed up to receive a copy of Version 6, you can do so by going to our website ([www.labsysgrp.com](http://www.labsysgrp.com)) and filling out the **Priority Reservation Form**. Shipping and handling fees along with other applicable upgrade charges will apply.

We will ship in sequential order based on the order of each reservation received. There is a waiting list, so we ask you to please be patient with us. We now have thousands of Lab Manager Users, and many of you are anxiously waiting for this new release.

### CD Tour and Videos

The Version 6 CD that you will receive contains 4 ways to learn more about the software.

**Tour:** Click on the **Tour button** to see a presentation of Version 6's major screens and an explanation of how they are used.

**Videos:** Click on the **Video button** to view tutorial videos before installing the program.

**Install:** Version 5 & 6 can run side by side on the same computer. Your Version 5 data will remain untouched. Just click on the **Install button**, call for an activation key, import your data and start using it.

**Read:** Click on the **Documentation** button to read one of several manuals and guides.

## Giving Birth to Version 6



I have been writing computer programs for over 30 years. My experience dates back to the 1970s when I was doing contract programming for busi-

nesses in and around the Phoenix area. During that time, I wrote many programs including a billing system for a local bank, an inventory system for a camera repair company, a billing system for a water and sewer company, and a work scheduling system for an aircraft parts manufacturing company.

Back then, each programming project involved months of work. Today, gigantic programming projects like Lab Manager Version 6 take years to finish and cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. One could argue that projects like this are never finished because there are always new things to add and improvements to make. This would not be the case if the industry stood still, but as you know, this industry is constantly changing; therefore, Lab Manager needs to keep changing.

When I was programming DOS computers, things were a lot simpler. The programmer was responsible for programming every feature. Today, that is not the case. Features like printing and previewing reports are left up to Microsoft Windows and third party printer drivers. The Lab Manager database is now handled by Microsoft's SQL Server software. Lab Manager uses several third party controls that add sophisticated features like those found in the Lab Manager "list" screens that allow the user to sort, filter, and group the data in the lists. Another example is the custom report generator that allows the user to customize all of Lab Manager's reports including invoices, statements, and work tickets.

Today, writing a program involves working with third party vendors, controls, Microsoft Windows, "ad-ins" and drivers. This means having to troubleshoot other peoples bugs as well as our own. Add to all of these things the fact that Version 6 contains about 500,000 lines of code and you can see that we're not in Kansas anymore.

This exponential increase in complexity has made testing programs like Lab Manager even more difficult. For example, we recently found a bug in Version 6 that was related to "over payments." This problem did not affect all of our users, only some of them. As we broke down the problem and analyzed it, we found there were over 64,000 possible combinations Lab Manager had to deal with. It dealt with most scenarios perfectly. It was just a few it had problems with. This problem never showed up in our beta testing even though our beta testing of Version 6 was our largest, most comprehensive test ever. It just isn't possible to find every bug.

So what is a software company to do? Well, they do what we have been doing. We test it internally and then we beta test the program by sending it to trusted testers around the country. Once everyone gives it their "thumbs up," we release it to the public... slowly. This is exactly what we have done. We have now shipped a little over 100 systems. As bugs crop up we stop shipments, fix the bugs, issue updates to everyone, and then resume shipments. Our number one priority is providing our customers with a bug free program and we are expending huge amounts of time and money to make it happen.

My thanks to all of you who are waiting patiently for your Version 6. It is coming and it is getting better every day. Some times the birthing process is painful, but the results are most rewarding.

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## Important Message

Microsoft just announced that it's next version of Windows (currently called Vista and due to start shipping around the end of 2006 and early 2007) will not support the MSDE version of SQL Server that Version 6 was designed to use. Instead, Microsoft will support a new program called SQL Server 2005 Express.

The Express version has no speed governor (which reduced the speed of the MSDE version) making the new Express version faster than it's predecessor. The new Express version is also more scalable and is better integrated with current programming languages.

We are excited about this change and hope to finish converting Lab Manager Version 6 to use the new Express version early in 2007. **This means that Lab Manager Version 6 will not operate on a computer with Windows Vista until we release that change.**