Newsletter #37 (Mar 27, 2010)

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What's New

New version 5.0

A new version of Campground Master was released in November. That was several months ago, but this is the first newsletter published since then. Of course if you're a current customer you will have already received a notice about it.

If you haven't upgraded yet, we recommend doing so at your earliest convenience. Version 5.0 has been working smoothly with no major issues reported.

As always, you can get the latest version at http://campgroundmaster.com/download_upgrade.html.

The next release is expected in about 2 months. This will include debit card pin-pad support for X-Charge users. If you're interested in beta testing this, let us know. You would also need to get a pin pad device from X-Charge/CAM Commerce to work with the system.

Friend Communications / (Leisure Interactive) update

The 2-way online booking integration with Friend Communications (now being referred to as Leisure Interactive) has been underway since October, and it has been working extremely well. We're very pleased with the results and we're seeing a huge benefit to our users.

If you've been considering online reservations, this is by far the best way to go.

You can read more about it here:
http://campgroundmaster.com/online.html

Support updates -- Daylight Savings Time - or not!

Daylight Savings Time has begun for most of you -- but here in Arizona, it's not observed. While our support hours are still 8AM to 6PM local time, we're on the same time as the Pacific time zone now (3 hours behind the east coast).

Also please note that you can leave a message any time and we do call back as soon as we're available. Please don't just keep calling without leaving a message -- besides having no way of calling you back if you don't leave a message, it can be annoying if we're on a support call and the call-waiting keeps beeping in. We will not interrupt a support call to answer an incoming call, and we hope our customers have the same courtesy when we're on the phone with them.

As an additional reminder, our toll-free number (877-414-8384) only goes to voice mail, not a live operator. If you want to save the long distance cost you are welcome to leave a message on this number so we call you back, but keep in mind that the response time may be slower because the messages are forwarded to us by E-mail.

Port Forwarding help

For those trying to set up the Networking option for remote access (to connect while at home or on the road, for instance), one of the most difficult issues is getting the Port Forwarding set up in your router. (A router is what most people use to connect the computer to the internet and local network.)

Here's a great web site that has specific instructions for port forwarding:

http://portforward.com/

This web site now has detailed configuration information for Campground Master -- just select your router/modem model form the long list on the main page, then select Campground Master from the list of programs. You will be given a pictorial walk-through of the configuration.

For more details on networking through the internet, refer to our online documentation:
http://campgroundmaster.com/help/networkingthroughtheinterne.html

USB Cash Drawers and Pole Displays

Version 5.0 now includes support for cash drawers and pole displays with USB interfaces. This means there is no longer a need to have a serial or parallel port (since most new computers don't have them anyway). This also makes it possible to use a cash drawer without requiring a receipt printer to connect it to.

Note that the only brand of USB cash drawer supported is APG, and the pole display must be a Logic Controls brand. We do sell these items, so see our web site or contact us for more information.

Q & A

Top Q&A's from past issues (copy)

We included this in the last newsletter (in August), but we're noticing that these questions still come up frequently in support calls. Here are some of the more common questions, with links to the past articles answering the question:

How to copy/transfer Campground Master to a new computer (or re-install)
http://campgroundmaster.com/copying.html

How to back-date transactions
http://campgroundmaster.com/news/back_datingtransactions.html

How to get Sales Tax information for state tax reporting
http://campgroundmaster.com/news/reportingtaxablesales.html

Color-coding holiday dates on the Rack
http://campgroundmaster.com/news/coloringtherackdatesforho.html

Entering security deposits (e.g. for electric, keys, damage, etc.)
http://campgroundmaster.com/news/howtorearrangesitesonthe_2.html

Resolving Uncategorized amounts on Receipts by Category
http://campgroundmaster.com/news/receiptsbycategoryreportad.html

PCI Compliance

Q: Is Campground Master PCI compliant as per the credit card merchant rules?

A: If you're using version 4.3 or later, it is PCI compliant -- as long as you haven't disabled any of the compliance options under Maintenance / Credit Cards / Security Setup, and also assuming you have performed the PCI compliance functions under Credit Cards / History/Security cleanup. If you enter credit card information into Campground Master, always be sure you're using the latest version to ensure up-to-date compliance, and be sure to leave the security settings configured as directed for PCI compliance.

Avoiding accidental program closure

Q: Sometimes I click on the "X" by mistake when I want to minimize the program, and it closes. Is there an option to keep it from closing when th X is clicked?

A: There's not an option exactly like that, but if you're not logged in as an Administrator level operator then it will prompt you when the "X" is clicked, e.g. "Do you really want to close the program", to minimize accidental closures. So we recommend that you use a non-administrative login for your normal operations, and only use an Administrator login when necessary for the higher level functions.

Different rates by rig size

Q: How can I charge 2 separate rates for the same RV site, if the rig is over or under 30 feet long.

A: You can use the "Applies if reservation field" part of the Rate definition to make one rate apply if the Rig Length is >= (greater than or equal to) 30 feet. Make sure that the rate for >= 30 feet appears ABOVE the rate for under 30 feet (in the Rates Setup list), so it takes priority. Likewise you could have several brackets if needed, just making sure that they are in order from longest to shortest. Also note that it's not necessary (or possible) to use the "Applies if reservation field" option for the shortest rig length, as that rate will be used automatically if the longer rig lengths don't apply.

IMPORTANT: There are 2 "Rig Length" fields -- one for the Customer record and one for the Reservation record. Both are set at once if you fill in the Rig Length when making a new reservation, in the New Reservation dialog. The Customer field is only used to remember their size for next time -- it is not used for the current reservation. Changing it in Customer Details will not automatically change the Reservation's rig length field. So if you're setting the rig length after a reservation has been made and need it to be used for the rates, you must go to Reservation Details and set it through the "Site Preferences" function.

Unlinking a reservation

Q: How can I unlink a reservation from others it's linked to?

A: There isn't a function to completely unlink reservations, but you can make them "non-synchronized". This is functionally the same, except for the reference to the other reservation seen in Reservation Details. On the Rack, right-click the one to be changed, and select Linked Reservations / Make this a non-synchronized reservation.

Reporting rates & balances

Q: How can I get a report showing site, name, rate, amount paid and balance due?

A: You can probably get what you want from the "On Site" tab view. Click the Options button on that view and enable the fields you want. While "rate" isn't an option, the "Auto-charges" will show the total auto-calculated charges so it should work if you have auto-rates set up correctly: http://campgroundmaster.com/help/auto_ratessetup.html

Note however that it takes time to do the auto-charges calculation, so this will slow down the display considerably.

Tips & Techniques

Tax rate changes (e.g. new HST tax)

Canada is implementing a new single "HST" tax rate soon which will replace the old tax rates, so you may need to accommodate that in Campground Master. Here is how you can do that, and the same procedure can be used to implement any other new tax rate.

First of all, resist the temptation to just rename or delete the previous tax categories or tax rate entries -- you need those for prior reporting and to keep existing reservations from becoming currupted. What you need to do is add a new tax rate for HST, and enable that for your Rates.

First go to Maintenance / Pick Lists / Transaction Categories. Check "Allow editing...", and Add a new record for the HST tax (or Insert it above the GST, if you like).

Then, add HST as a new tax under Park Setup / Taxes. Don't replace the others, just use the next empty slot. You probably don't want to check the "Default" option until the day it takes effect. This won't affect the Rates, but if you add Charges or Discounts manually, it determines whether that tax option is selected by default -- so change the Default selections only after the new tax rate is in effect.

If you also have Rates set up, you need to change the tax selection in them. To change the Rates to use the new tax (in Park Setup / Rates), Edit each rate definition and change the "Auto-add tax" checkboxes to add HST instead of the other taxes.

You can either wait until the day the new tax takes effect to change the rates, or you can make a new copy of all of your rates that need the tax rate changes and make the new rates take effect automatically after the change date by using the Season Dates Applicable, similar to preparing rates for a new year as described in this article:
http://campgroundmaster.com/news/changingratesforthenewyea.html

There are advantages to doing it as a 2nd copy, especially for auto-rates and/or if you add charges before they check in, since setting it up with "season dates" will ensure that the rates take effect based on the dates of the stay rather than when you add the charges. So this is the recommended method, however it is more time consuming.

Adding "Due Back By" on custom receipts

The original sample Form templates for receipts did not include the logic to show the end-of-period text for Scheduled (hourly) reservations. For instance, this might be set for "Due back by 1PM" for a 12PM hourly period in the Schedules setup. Here is how you can correct that.

Note that this is only an issue if you use Schedules, and only if you have set the end-of-period text for each period in your schedules.

1. In the Form definition, look for the Reservations & Site Info region (Edit the main "margin" region and you should see it).

2. Locate the expression that displays the last night (or period):

```
DateToText(Resv:Resv_Last_Date) +
iif(ThisSchedule() = NullRecord(), "", " : " +
FieldText(Resv(),"Resv_Last_Period"))
```

3. Change it to:

```
DateToText(Resv:Resv_Last_Date) +
iif(ThisSchedule() = NullRecord(), "", " : " +
FieldText(Resv(),"Resv_Last_Period") +
iif(FieldText(LinkedRecord(Resv(), "Resv_Last_Period"),
"Perd_End") != "", " (" + FieldText(LinkedRecord(Resv(),
"Resv_Last_Period"), "Perd_End") + ")", ""))
```

The expression is broken into multiple lines for formatting here, but it must be continuous (no line breaks) when you enter it.

That should do it!

Importing a 2-up ticket form

There is a sample form that prints 2 copies of the Ticket Form on one sheet of paper. This of course reduces the space available for each, so it eliminates the "Additional Notes" part (if used) and limits the number of transactions that can be shown on one page.

1. Go to Maintenance / Advanced Customizations / Forms.

2. Click the Import Form(s) button, and you'll get a typical Windows file dialog labelled "Import Forms". You need to locate the sample Forms folder, which is typically C:\Program Files\Campground Master\Samples. Use the "Look In" drop-down box at the top of the dialog to navigate up to C: if necessary, then double-click each folder (Program Files, then Campground Master, then Samples) to get into the Samples folder.

3. Now select the appropriate file, for instance "Sample Form - 2-up Ticket Form" to get the 2-up Ticket Form template, and click Open.

The new form(s) will appear at the bottom. You can use the Move Up function to move it to a different location in the list if preferred.

To make it the default receipt form, go to Maintenance / Printing Options / Receipts, and select that form for the default reservation receipt.

Query customers excluded from E-mail

Here is an example of a simple query, where the user wants a list of all customers that have the "Exclude from E-mail" flag set.

As with any Advanced Customization function, Queries can get pretty technical. We recommend reading through the documentation if you want to understand more about making custom queries. This particular query is one of the simplest to do.

Follow these steps:

1. Go to Maintenance / Advanced Customizations / Queries.

2. Click "Add Query".

3. You'll be given a choice of List or Cross-table -- select "List Query".

4. Enter a name for the query -- e.g. "Excluded from E-mail"

5. Select "Customers" for the Base Table.

6. Click "Quick-Add Fields". This is an easy way to select the fields (columns) you want to be shown in the report.

7. Double-click on each data field you need to see -- e.g. First Names, Last Name, E-mail, State, etc. As you double-click each one in the left-hand column, it will move to the right-hand "Selected" column. If you have trouble double-clicking, you can click on the field and then click the "-->" button to move it over. Click "Done" when finished adding fields.

8. Now we need to tell it which customer records we need. Click "Edit Filtering Conditions...", then click "Add New Condition".

9. Enter the text below for the expression (all spacing and punctuation must be exact as well as the spelling and capitalization):

```
Cust:Cust_Exclude_Email = .T.
```

10. Save that, then click Done to get back to Edit List Query Definition. You can click "Save & Test" to make sure it works OK if you like.

11. Save & Close, back to the main screen.

If this is your first query, you'll notice that a new "Queries" tab view has appeared between Payments Due and Transactions. Go to that tab view and select the new query from the list at the top.