CTAS News and Notes

Small City & Town Accounting System (CTAS)

Office of the State Auditor

Government Information Division

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CTAS 2017 Update

CTAS 2017 is now available for download from the State Auditor's Form Entry System (SAFES) at https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/safes/. **All entities that purchased CTAS Version 8 can upgrade to CTAS 2017 at no cost.**

CTAS 2017, the most current version of CTAS, is the first version of CTAS to reflect a new easy-to-remember naming convention for CTAS versions. We plan to make updates to CTAS each year in an effort to continue to improve the program, and each update's name will reflect the year of the update.

CTAS 2017 included feature enhancements requested by users as well as fixes to bugs. We want to thank all CTAS users who contacted us with suggestions for the program and those of you who participated in our survey to determine which features to include in the update.

The update is available for download at https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/safes/. Documents and videos with instructions for downloading and installing CTAS 2017 can be found at http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=ctasv8training. CTAS 2017 will work on Windows 7, 8, 8.1 and Windows 10.

If you have any questions, please contact us at CTAS@osa.state.mn.us.

CTAS 7 Files No Longer Accepted

The OSA does not provide support for CTAS Version 7 and no longer accepts year-end financial reporting forms prepared on Version 7. If you are still using Version 7, you will need to either upgrade to CTAS 2017 or download the Local Government Reporting Form for 2016 reporting from SAFES.

Order forms for CTAS 2017 are available on our website at:

http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/other/ctas/docs/CTAS_Order_Form.pdf

Documents and videos with instructions for downloading and installing CTAS 2017 can be found at http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=ctasv8training.

IMPORTANT: Remember to back up your data using an external storage device before upgrading your CTAS system. Information on backing up CTAS data can be found later in this Newsletter.

CTAS User Manual

Most questions we receive from users can be quickly answered in the CTAS User Manual. The Manual includes step-by-step instructions with screenshots for using CTAS. The CTAS User Manual is available on our website at: http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=ctasv8manual.

The Manual includes chapters on setting up your CTAS system; the Accounting Modules (Receipts, Claims, Disbursements, Budget, Financial Reports, Chart of Accounts, Administration, etc.); Payroll; Investments; Indebtedness; and Program Support.

Important Reporting Dates

Due March 31:

Town Financial Reporting Form – Cash Basis of Accounting

City Financial Reporting Form – Cash Basis of Accounting

City Financial Statements Audited or Unaudited - Cash Basis of Accounting

Due June 30:

Town Financial Reporting Form – in Accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP)

Town Audited Financial Statements – GAAP Basis of Accounting

City Financial Reporting Form – GAAP Basis of Accounting

City Audited Financial Statements – GAAP Basis of Accounting

Using CTAS Chart of Accounts and the Wizard Tool

The OSA recommends that all CTAS users follow the CTAS Chart of Accounts. The Chart of Accounts can be located under the "CTAS Documents" heading on the CTAS page of the OSA website at: http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=ctas.

CTAS makes it easy to add a Fund, Account Number and/or Object Code by using the program's "Wizard". The Wizard is a tool in the program that asks a series of questions, then generates a Fund Number, Account Number, or Object Code. Be sure to refer to the CTAS Chart of Accounts before creating new Funds, Accounts or Object codes.

Step-by-step instructions and screenshots for using the Wizard to set up new Funds, Accounts, and Object codes is located in Chapter 8 of the CTAS Manual at: http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/other/ctas/CTAS_v8_Manual/CTASv8UserManual.pdf.

Audit Requirements for Cities and Towns

Not all cities and towns have the same audit requirements. Audit requirements can vary depending on a variety of factors including the population of the city or town, whether the clerk and treasurer positions are combined, and whether the city or town is above or below the current audit revenue threshold.

Please review audit requirements to make sure your entity is in compliance. Audit requirements can be found on the OSA website at:

http://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=faq.

Please feel free to contact us at GID.OSA@osa.state.mn.us if you have any questions regarding audit requirements.

CTAS Checks

The vendors listed here offer checks that work with CTAS. The OSA does not recommend vendors, but offers this resource for your CTAS check printing needs.

Tammy & Shaun Stottler

American Solutions for Business

19562 Halwood Rd

Glenwood, MN 56334

Phone: (320) 634-3344

Fax: (320) 634-0287

tstottle@americanbus.com

Rose Shorma

Proforma Rose Shorma

826 East Lake Geneva Rd.

Alexandria, MN 56308

Phone: (320) 763-5535

Fax: (320) 762-1555

Cell: (320) 760-8212

rose.shorma@proforma.com

Lonny Duenow

Victor Lundeen Corp.

126 West Lincoln Avenue

Fergus Falls, MN 56537

Phone: (218) 736-5433

Phone: (800) 346-4870

lonny@victorlundeens.com

Bob Closser

Government Forms & Supplies

390 E Tyrone St

Le Center MN 56057

Phone: (844) 224-3338

bclosser@frontiernet.net

These vendors also offer window envelopes for mailing checks printed with CTAS.

Accounting for Transfers

A transfer should only be recorded when money is moved from one Fund to another Fund.

Note: When money comes from an investment (savings, CDs, money market, etc.) to checking it would be a sale of investment to the designated Fund rather than a transfer. When money goes into an investment (savings, CDs, money market, etc) from checking it would be a purchase of investment rather than a transfer. A transfer is recorded only when it moves from one Fund to another Fund.

For example, a transfer of $3,000 from the General Fund to the Fire Fund, approved at a council or board meeting, must be recorded as both a Receipt and Disbursement.

The first entry records the transfer into the Fire Fund. This is done through Receipts by Adding a Receipt. Complete the Receipt information making sure the Account Number is in the range of 39201 to 39224, which are transfer account numbers. Then click the Save button. Note: You may use the wording TRF in the Receipt Number space with the date of the transfer after TRF to keep track of transfers.

The second entry is to enter the Disbursement portion of the transfer. Select Add Disbursement and enter all the information for the transfer, including Account Number 49360 or 49365, which are transfer account numbers. Also, enter Object Code 720, which indicates it is an interfund transfer. Note: You may use the wording TRF in the Check Number space along with the date of the transfer after TRF. This will help you track the transfer.

Running and reviewing a Schedule 1 (Statement of Receipts, Disbursements and Balances) will identify whether the transfer was recorded correctly. This information can be found in Chapter 2 of the CTAS Manual.

Access CTAS Training Materials Online

Video and printed instructions for downloading, installing and using CTAS Version 8 are available on the OSA website.

To access these materials, go to the OSA website, www.auditor.state.mn.us. Find the "For Local Officials" tab at the top of the page, then click on "CTAS". This will bring you to the CTAS page: once there, click on "Getting Started".

This page is frequently updated with new training materials.

SAFES Usernames and Passwords

We want to thank all of the entities who use the State Auditor's Form Entry System (SAFES) to download and submit their forms and documents to the OSA. If you are a SAFES user, here are helpful hints when using SAFES:

1) Each SAFES user must have a username and password. Others should not know or use your password. If you need a SAFES username, please send an e-mail to SAFES@osa.state.mn.us with your entity name, your name, position, public mailing address, phone number, and e-mail address. We will e-mail you your username so you can request a password.

2) Your SAFES e-mail address or username can be used to reset passwords. For security, you should use an e-mail address that only you have access to. You should not use a shared e-mail address such as an entity's e-mail address as your SAFES e-mail.

3) The contact information you provide to us is considered public. The OSA will be required to provide your contact information if a data request is made for it. Please keep this in mind when choosing the contact information you provide to us.

Electronic Fund Transfer Payments

Some local governments receive multiple Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) payments from the State. The payments are generated by Minnesota Management & Budget (MMB).

Each local government can log into MMB's website at https://mn.gov/mmb/ to view EFT payment information. Local governments can also sign up for e-mail alerts indicating when payments are made, the amounts, and the type of payment. The MMB EFT phone number is 651-201-8106, and their e-mail is efthelpline.mmb@state.mn.us.

There are many benefits to receiving electronic fund payments from the State, including assuring that checks don't get lost or that you won't have to go out in a snowstorm to pick up a check. EFT also eliminates the confusion over which year a deposit should be recorded. In addition, when an entity receives EFT payments from the State, the OSA's review of financial reporting forms is simplified and the number of questions we may need to ask you is reduced.

The CTAS Helpline is Available to Help You

Call, fax or e-mail your CTAS questions. If no one is immediately available, we will respond the next workday.

Call:

(651) 296-6262

Fax:

(651) 296-4755

E-mail:

CTAS@osa.state.mn.us

Reminder: Report Change of Officers

When the person filling the role of a Clerk or Treasurer for local government changes, the local government is responsible for contacting the OSA to update this information as soon as possible. Reminder notices or other important information may not reach the correct individuals if the change is not reported.

To report a change of officers, send an e-mail to GID.OSA@osa.state.mn.us. In the subject line, please put "Change in Contact Information" and provide us with only work/public contact information, such as e-mail, mailing address and telephone number. Thank you!

Remember to Back Up Your Data!

The OSA has been able to help CTAS users recover data when they have made a backup copy of their CTAS information. Backup copies can be saved to a CD, flash drive or other external storage device. Backups should be created using the backup process in the CTAS program. Go to the Admin tab, then the Utilities (F6) tab.

We recommend backing up all of your data as frequently as possible, at least once a week. In addition to backing up the information in the CTAS program, you should back up related files created by other programs such as word processing and spreadsheet programs. Detailed backup instructions are located in Chapter 10 of the CTAS Manual.

Contact us at Your Convenience

A number of CTAS users conduct town or city business in the evening or on weekends when the CTAS Helpline is not available. By using the CTAS e-mail, CTAS@osa.state.mn.us, a response to your question will generally be sent to you the next business day.

Also, the CTAS page on the OSA website has information that is accessible 24/7 that may help answer your questions. To view the page, please go to:

www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=ctas.