

TO: James L. App, City Manager
FROM: Jim Throop, Administrative Services Director
SUBJECT: Report Writer Upgrade – Utility Billing
DATE: September 16, 2014

NEEDS: For the City Council to consider allocating reserve funds from the Water/Sewer Enterprise funds to purchase an upgraded software module for the utility billing system.

- FACTS:**
1. The City's utility billing system is a Harris product called Northstar. It was purchased and installed in 2005/2006.
 2. The City has over 10,500 customers that are billed each month, with an average turnover of 300 accounts per month, and close to 300 additional work orders for meter testing, re-reads, etc.
 3. The current billing system has a report writer that is very antiquated and does not function properly, creating issues when running billing reports or special reports for Water and Sewer Divisions.
 4. In order to create new reports or make adjustments to current reports, services of the vendor must be used, at a substantial charge, rather than being able to create or modify their reports in house.
 5. The report writer is needed for day-to-day business as well as pulling information for State/Federal reports. It is also necessary when working on water and sewer rate calculations.
 6. The Reports Anywhere (RAW) is a user-friendly report writer that will allow staff to create reports.

**Analysis &
Conclusion:**

The City implemented its current utility billing software system, NorthStar, in 2005/2006. The system came with a report writer, but due to age and other issues it is not functioning properly and is not a user-friendly software.

The Water and Sewer Divisions are very dependent upon data from the Utility Billing system. Many State and Federal reports require annual data from the system, but due to the issues with the report writer, City staff typically have to engage the software vendor to write/update reports, at a substantial cost. A typical report will cost between \$1,000 and \$2,000, depending on the complexity of the required report.

This report writer is also critical when it is time to review/update the water and sewer rates. Information is required from the utility billing system for these rate studies and it is critical that the data be correct and to be pulled in a timely manner. Currently, the staff will need to the vendor to run/verify that the reports are correctly pulling all the data.

The software vendor has a new report writer that is user-friendly and has fixed issues that were part of the current software. Staff, from both the Water and Sewer funds, can be trained to use this new report writer, thus saving thousands of dollars per year.

Discussions have been held with the Utility Billing staff, Water & Sewer Divisions, Department of Public Works, and Information Technology staff - all agree that it is necessary to update the software.

**POLICY
REFERENCE**

Information Technology Strategic Plan.

**FISCAL
IMPACT:**

The cost of the new "RAW" report writer is \$10,550. This price includes a \$3,000 discount due to the recent purchase of the mCARE module. The cost includes the software (\$9,450) and one year of maintenance (\$1,100). There are no additional travel costs as the new software will be remotely installed.

No additional servers or other hardware will be needed.

Software/Installation -	\$9,450
1-year Maintenance -	\$1,100
Total	<u>\$10,550</u>

Water and Sewer Funds have reserve capacity to cover the cost of this purchase. The cost of this purchase could actually be recovered within one year, due to the fact that the vendor should no longer be needed to create/update reports. The typical vendor report costs between \$1,000 and \$2,000 and the City typically needs five or more reports per year, thus the cost recovery of one to two years.

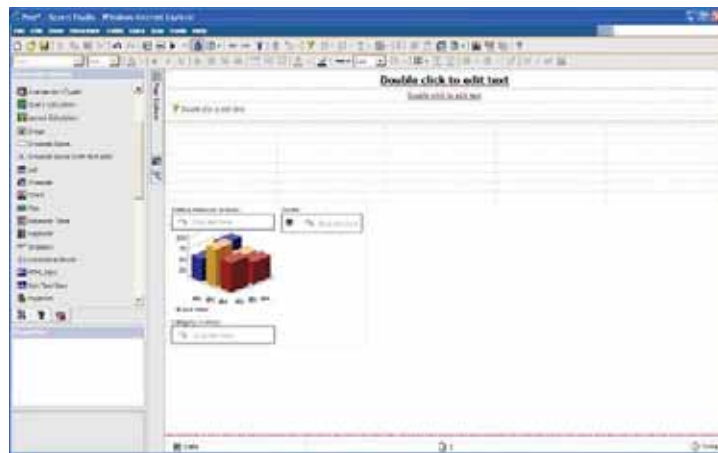
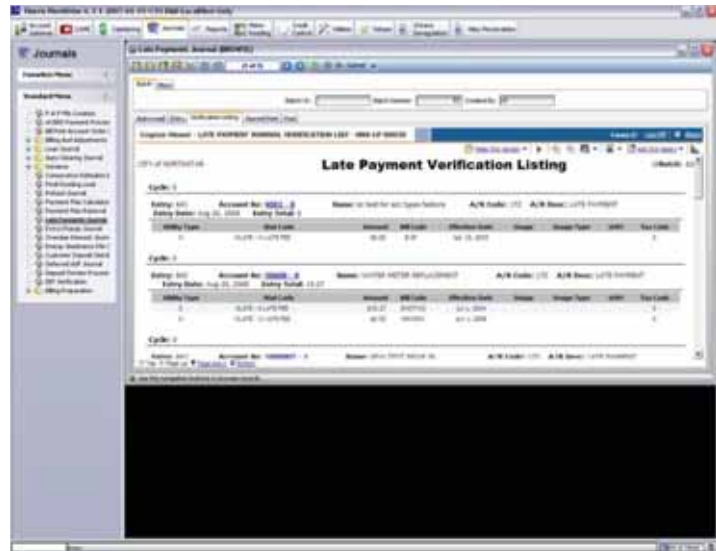
Options:

- a. That the Council adopt Resolution No. 14-XXX approving the appropriation of \$10,550 from the Water and Sewer Funds, per that attached Budget Adjustment form, for the purchase of the "Report Anywhere" (RAW) software and one-year's worth of software maintenance, as shown in attachment A; or
- b. Amend, modify, or reject the above option



Reports AnyWhere

Reports AnyWhere is a powerful reporting software based on IBM Cognos Business Intelligence (BI) technology. The solution consists of a highly embedded and integrated version Cognos BI tools into NorthStar. The end result is a powerful and seamlessly integrated Utility reporting solution. Some of the Cognos BI tools and features incorporated in the solution include Report Writer (which features a graphical drag and drop report design studio), Report Scheduler, Report Distribution (email or web publishing), multiple pre-designed report templates, charts and graphs. Our new reporting solution is extremely flexible and easy to use and has some very strong features such as hyperlinks and full drill through capabilities, which means users can navigate reports contents in a similar way you would navigate web pages in a browser.

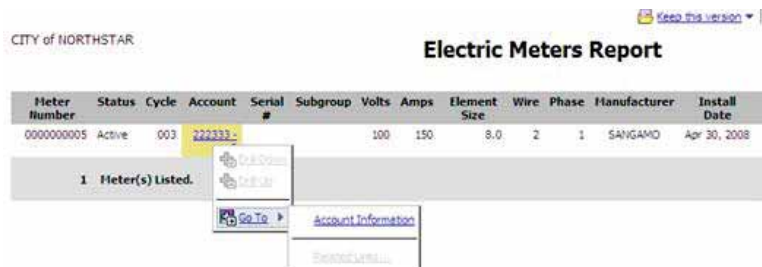


Report Designer

Included in the solution is a graphical, drag and drop based report designer which allows users to rapidly design or customize any reports, dashboard or performance scorecards. The report designer features an easy to use interface and a large set of predefined reports templates to get you started quickly.

Hyper Links & Drill Through

Hyper Links & Drill Through is a feature that allows you to navigate the reports to either access more detailed information (Drill Down), or return to a high level view (Drill Up). Similar to web navigation, this feature allow you to rapidly access more detailed reports on information that is presented to the users. The report library provided with Reports Anywhere has been carefully designed to take maximum advantage of this feature and all reports make extensive use of Hyper Links and Drill Through.





Smart Prompts

Smart Prompt is the first screen you will see when running a complex reports. It allows the user to set specific criteria or filters for the reports that is about to be presented. For example on a customer listing report, the user might specify that he only what to see customers within a specific zip code. All Smart Prompt have been designed to be easy to use and provide maximum flexibility to perform advanced filtering of information.



Report Scheduling & Publishing

Report scheduling allows users to automatically execute a report, or a set of report at a predetermined time and date. This feature also has the option of publishing the reports after automatic execution. For example, a report can be published to an internal web site, or distributed to an e-mail list.

Format Conversion

Reports can be generated in multiple formats including HTML, PDF, XML or Excel. Existing reports can also be easily converted from one format to another by a single selection.



Multi-Nested Lists

Multi-nested lists are used primarily in batch driven processes (Billing Journals, Cash Receipts listing, etc). They may contain several too many accounts that need to be printed sequentially on the report. Each Account will have one or more nested lists that need to appear immediately after the parent account list. In this example, "Accounts" are the primary list while "Services", "Meters" and "Charges" are the child lists.



Simple List Reports

There are probably hundreds of these types of reports. They are important reports but typically not used heavily. These reports will vary in their complexity; some will be just a single list with some sort of grand total on the last page. Other reports may contain additional subtotalling and grouping depending on the nature of the report.

Reports AnyWhere is not mandatory with NorthStar version 6. We will continue to support the current reporting tool.

The following is a partial list of the Reports AnyWhere Report Library.

- A/R Trial Balance by Account
- A/R Trial Balance by Service
- Account Deposit Listing
- A/R Description List
- Category Code Report
- CC Exemptions Report
- Credit Balance Detailed by Service
- Credit Balance Summary Report
- Credit Card Expiration Report
- Credit Control Exceptions
- Customer Deposits Listing
- Debt Collector Payments
- Electric Meters Report
- Electric Rate Adjustments
- Electric Rates Listing
- Electric Reading History
- Extra Charge Journal Verification List
- Flat Rates Listing
- Gas Meter Report
- Gas Reading History
- GL Archive Summary
- Landlord Trial Balance
- Late Payment Journal Verification List
- Lien Process Listing

The screenshot displays the 'BILLING JOURNAL VERIFICATION' report in Cognos Viewer. The account information is as follows:

Account No.	Name	City/Region	RD
20001244	HILL, LESLIE B	581	001

The 'Services' table shows a list of services with columns for Service, Rate, and various dates. The 'History' table shows a list of history items with columns for Date, Amount, and Description. The 'Charges' table shows a list of charges with columns for Charge, Amount, and Date.

RESOLUTION NO. 14-xxx

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PASO ROBLES
APPROVING THE PURCHASE OF THE REPORTS ANYWHERE (RAW) SOFTWARE FOR
THE UTILTIY BILLING SYSTEM

WHEREAS, the City's utility billing system was originally installed in 2005/2006 and the current report writer came with the original software; and

WHEREAS, the City spends between \$1,000 and \$2,000 per report for vendor assistance in writing reports, due to the current report system not being user-friendly; and

WHEREAS, report generation is very important for State and Federal reporting requirements as well as during the water and sewer rate studies; and

WHEREAS, "payback" on this new report writer could be as little as one year.

THEREFORE BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of El Paso de Robles that the City Manager is authorized to execute a contract for the purchase of the Report Anywhere software for the utility billing system with Harris Company, with appropriation noted on the attached Budget Adjustment form.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE City Council of the City of Paso Robles this 16th day of September, 2014 by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ATTEST:

Duane Picanco, Mayor

Caryn Jackson, Deputy City Clerk

Approvals/workflow 1. Dept Head 2. Admin Svcs 3. City Manager 4. City Council	City of Paso Robles BUDGET ADJUSTMENT REQUEST Report Writer (RAW) for UB system	Budget JE # AGENDA DATE 8/16/2014
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DESCRIPTION	ORG #	OBJECT #	PROJECT #	AMOUNT
FINANCING SOURCES				
Water Fund	600	99999		\$5,275
Sewer Fund	601	99999		5,275
TOTAL FINANCING SOURCES				\$10,550
FINANCING USES				
Software	6001501	52205		\$4,725
Software	6011502	52205		\$4,725
Software Maintenance	6001501	54540		\$550
Software Maintenance	6011502	54540		550
TOTAL FINANCING USES				\$10,550

JUSTIFICATION: (attach letter if required)

REQUESTED BY: _____ **REVIEWED & APPROVED BY:** _____

Date Department Head Date Administrative Services

APPROVED BY: _____

Date City Manager

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Paso Robles, State of California, this _____ day of _____ 20____. Agenda Item No. _____

ATTEST: _____
Deputy City Clerk