

# R&L BROSAMER INC.

A newsletter for our employees and friends  
Winter 2008



**THE CONVERSION TEAM: Standing (L-R): Lee Berkey, Sandi Nethercott, Sue Blair, Kathy Verello, Bill Bucher, Sandy Krummes, Farid Saddik, Sheena Shirley, Cindy Lundquist, Mike Manela, Deane Allin; Sitting (L-R): Tobi Upson, Laura Billingsley, Marla Nakaso, Tami Taylor, Teresa Rebman, Danielle Amerio.**

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## OPERATING SOFTWARE CONVERSION MOVES BROSAMER TO FRONT OF LINE

**O**NCE IN A GREAT WHILE A COMPANY UNDERTAKES AN EXPANSION AND REDESIGN THAT MARKS A watershed moment in its life and its future. R&L Brosamer took that bold step recently with a massive software conversion — seamless to many employees, but a strategic test of endurance, resourcefulness, and teamwork to others.

“For years, we’ve managed our core accounting system and business operations with TrueLine software, which was originally designed for the way Brosamer did business, but it had become archaic,” says Laura Billingsley, database manager and system administrator.

“TrueLine designers weren’t able to further enhance the program as our business was developing and evolving, so we made a

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**Kick-off meeting with IT, AP, and PR departments.**

## SOFTWARE CONVERSION

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major decision to take our company's data into the future."

Live since September 2008, the modern and progressive Explorer Contract Manager system has replaced the old TrueLine system, and with that pivotal accomplishment, Brosamer has positioned itself for continued growth as we move through today's challenges and plan for robust years to come.

The arduous multi-year process and the resulting success demonstrate the finest examples of foresight, teamwork, and innovation. Most of the planning, training, and executing were performed by Brosamer employees, saving the company tens of thousands of out-of-pocket consultant dollars. In choosing the programs, we made no concessions in quality or functionality, and in the process, actually drove program

enhancements to meet Brosamer's business operating needs.

The conversion story is about advancements in software and hardware technology, yes. But more so, it is about the people of R&L Brosamer who rose to the challenge, took responsibility, and with tireless efforts, long hours, and more than one heated discussion, propelled Brosamer by leaps and bounds to become more efficient and productive, with a focus on data accuracy and accessibility, user-friendly document management, and improved communications between headquarters, field offices, departments, and individuals.

### The Search begins

In early 2007, a committee was formed to establish software and hardware requirements and map the conversion. Farid Saddik, Laura Billingsley, Linda

Brosamer, Cindy Lundquist, Jose Escobedo, Deane Allin, Rusty Hosely, and John Pologar took on that task.

Explorer Software, a Vancouver company that had already made the committee's A list, had recently purchased TrueLine.

"As it turned out, Explorer offered the best heavy highway construction system package for us, and that's Contract Manager," says Laura.

The fact that Explorer was willing to customize the system for Brosamer's operations, such as write and build in equipment and rate enhancements, was a deciding factor.

Additionally, Brosamer invested in top-tier hardware, including computers, high-speed printer/scanners, and new on-site servers with failsafe mechanisms.

Responsible for the success of the hardware conversion were Brosamer's IT

experts, Farid Saddik, chief information officer, and Mike Manela, network manager.

"You don't do this for a short-term return," says Cindy Lundquist, CFO. "Brosamer desires to empower its employees, and the substantial investment we've made in our people and our infrastructure will show its return over many, many years."

### Efficiency, accuracy, timeliness, ease

Contract Manager is a centralized, user-friendly, security-enhanced, Windows-familiar system providing easy data entry and retrieval; accuracy accountability; clear and readable reports; and data mining and customized reporting capabilities. Electronic document scanning replaces photocopying, which eliminates redundancy; minimizes paper usage, storage space, and postal and

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# SOFTWARE CONVERSION

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courier deliveries; and reduces time spent boxing, storing, and sifting through files for document retrieval.

Real-time electronic scanning and data entry provide fingertip information management and control, enhancing project, equipment, and cash flow management. Daily scanning and data entry replaces invoice batching and weekly check runs, making AP, payroll, and general ledger information easily accessible and real time. And, to everyone's delight, built-in and customized reports replace cross-referencing and spreadsheets.

## Implementation team

Much of the conversion's success is due to the dedicated efforts of the first core group of users who had to step outside their comfort zones and embrace the vision of a stronger, more efficient company. Not only would AP and payroll need to learn Contract Manager, they would have to parallel key for a full quarter while they tested the new system. From June through September 2008, accounting functions used both TrueLine and

Contract Manager.

That first brave group included Sue Blair, Sandy Nethercott, and Sheena Shirley in accounts payable; Kathy Verello, Danielle Amerio, Sandy Krummes, and Tami Taylor in payroll; Teresa Rebman, in accounts payable/payroll reporting; Lee Berkey, in sub-contract/accounts receivable; and Tobi Upson, in implementation support.

Additionally, two highly experienced consultants from Crystal Consulting Partners, Bill Bucher and Marla Nakaso, worked side by side with the Brosamer team pacing the schedule, guiding installation and implementation, and resolving software and hardware issues through the conversion.

"Among other invaluable services, Bill coordinated the safe passage with Explorer for us, which was importing all our data from the old system into the new system," says Cindy.

"When we initiated safe passage in June 2008 and were double keying, Bill and Marla worked in the background, trouble shooting and helping to balance payroll and cost reports. They got us to a point where both sys-

tems had been balancing for a while, so in September we cut over, dropping TrueLine and operating in a next-generation system."

## Cleaning house

Going through conversion "forced us to look at our work flow issues and presented opportunities for examination of every business operation and process," says Cindy.

Explorer delivered and installed the software electronically, but nothing is ever previously set up on a job-cost accounting system. We had to set up just about everything from scratch — all of the master data, decide on and activate the functionality we would need, populate all the new codes and categories, and design the check templates. It was a blank canvas that we had to paint with our own Brosamer colors to suit the direction we wanted to take the data.

"We thought a lot about how we are doing things, how we can do them better. Why are we doing it this way, shouldn't we be doing it this way?" says Laura. "It was a mental shift for our entire company. It wasn't just about installing new software, it was about re-shaping the way we do business and how we could be more efficient."

"That's why it only took us one quarter with only two consultants to help us," says Tobi, "because these people," referring to Laura and Cindy and the trouble shooters, "did so much work before it even got to our core group level."

"Well, that was the plan; we really wanted the users to like the new system and take



**Chief Information Officer Farid Saddik**

off with it to help us get to the next level," says Laura, who laughs now when she thinks about how "terribly motivated I was to make this succeed.

"When we went live in September, we were confident that we had redesigned our core business systems for efficiency and accuracy, that the bugs were out, and that we were up to speed at the cut-over."

## Document management, fingertip accessibility, information control, better data

With TrueLine, invoices were photocopied, assigned vendor numbers, dispersed to the field, and filed away.

"We have anywhere from 50 to 100 invoices a day," says Sue Blair, in accounts payable. "If a vendor called and asked a question about an invoice, well, we wouldn't be able to answer him, because we wouldn't have

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**Sue Blair, Laura Billingsley, and Tobi Upson were interviewed for this article.**

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easy access to the activity on that invoice. We'd call the field office, find out why it had been held up or what other activity was going on with it, and then we'd get back to the vendor."

Contract Manager employs real-time electronic scanning and filing; upon arrival, invoices are scanned and entered into the system, establishing electronic trails accessible to all end users.

"It doesn't matter so much who touched the document, but what action has been taken on it, because all the notes regarding those actions — from us and from the field — are in the computer," says Sue. "Now, when a vendor calls, "we can go to the system and follow the electronic trail, because all the information regarding that document is in the system."

Field office manager Tobi Upson credits the intensive hands-on training for her confidence in CM.

"In the past, we'd have to call into the headquarters and ask someone to look in the files for action on an invoice or other document, and have it faxed," she says.

"Now, all the information is in the system, and the field will have access to the information. We'll be able to pull up an invoice or a report and see the data on the screen. That means more control for us in the field of our daily business operations."

Eventually, field offices will input their own data — quantities and daily diary entries, for instance — which will eliminate headquarters rekeying and reduce the potential for data entry error. Field managers can look forward to information retrieval and cost management tools they've



**Tami Taylor, Tobi Upson, Sandy Krummes, and Kathy Verello.**



**Jose Escobedo helped design a custom equipment module.**

never had before.

"We've finished launching Contract Manager internally. We'll launch out into the field through 2009 to office managers, project managers, and project engineers, who will be able to manage their own job data entry and information retrieval," says Cindy.

## **The equipment module**

A great deal of work on behalf of equipment went into making the conversion successful because Contract Manager is basically a dispatch-driven system that presumes all equipment is dispatched from a local yard or maintenance facility every day, then comes home to that yard every night.

"We don't follow the built-in dispatch system; we're more complex than that," says Equipment Manager Jose Escobedo, who spent months coordinating with Explorer to develop an equipment module that would serve Brosamer's needs.

"We operate as a project-

driven business, whereby each job is basically a separate yard and equipment is dispatched from and returned to a specific job site.

"One of the great things about Explorer was that they were willing to work with us and build a custom equipment module for us. We know the value of having great software, which is why we worked so hard to get a package that would work for us. It was months in the making, but they rewrote and reprogrammed the system to give us what we needed, and what we have is an unbelievable program," says Jose.

In fact, Explorer built Brosamer's project-driven model into its own equipment module and is now selling it to other clients.

"We have better data, better reports," says Jose enthusiastically. "The equipment module gives us control like we've never had before. We have equipment history and status reports and job cost analyses in nicely formatted and easy to read reports.

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**Teresa Rebman, Sheena Shirley, and Cindy Lundquist.**

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“The transparency of the system will allow the project managers to see all job costs, where they came from, and how they were generated. We can track equipment within the system, including its history, its use, its location, its maintenance, and if it was sold. Everything is located in one accessible desktop location; there is no cross-referencing and comparing different reports. Bye-bye spreadsheets.”

The lifeline of Brosamer’s business is in knowing historical costs.

“Contract Manager allows us to come up with far better costing systems in terms of projecting job bids and for allocating resources and for collecting true bid costs,” says Jose. “The possibilities for achievement are limitless.”

**It comes down to teamwork**

“We purchased Contract

Manager in August 2007, and went live September 30, 2008,” says Cindy. “The journey we took in that year is the real story behind conversion. Yes we did it, we took this very big step — a huge commitment of time and financial resources — to modernize and position ourselves for the future.

“But what’s intriguing is how we were able to install new software, re-design our operating processes with no interruptions in business, and go live a year later — just one short year later. That’s the success story — that we did a fantastic job pacing and controlling this huge conversion in terms of both human and hard dollar resources.

“The journey represents the corporate culture of R&L Brosamer — that teamwork and commitment have always been at the core of our success, and continue to move us together further than we could ever imagine.”



**Laura Billingsley (left) with Bill Bucher and Marla Nakaso, of Crystal Consulting.**

# MEET LAURA BILLINGSLEY, R&L BROSAMER DATABASE MANAGER

**L**AURA BILLINGSLEY SHARES HER EASY SMILE AND VAST KNOWL-

**EDGE WITH** anyone who comes to ask her for help. Her acute intuition, inquisitive nature, and ability to “absorb everything people have taught me” serve her well as database manager in Brosamer’s IT department.

“When someone tells me what they need, I try to make that happen,” says Laura. She allows the problem to percolate while working on the solution. “I don’t want to leave anything hanging.” Laura’s resolve leads to “aha” moments that position her as the go-to person for data-related issues. She’s the one to see for that illusive custom report.

Laura was born in Oakland, reared in Hayward, and lives in Concord with her teenage sons, Jimmy and Zachary. She loves to cook and travel, two interests that tap into her joy of learning, exploring, creating, and problem solving.

Laura has been with the Brosamer family since 1983, with a short two years away at an environmental consulting company, where she developed project management skills and experience in office management issues.

Amazing mentors have played significant roles in Laura’s personal and professional growth and in her many-hats career at Brosamer.

“Growing up, I was surrounded by strong, influen-



**LAURA BILLINGSLEY**

tial, and brilliant women,” says Laura, who regards her mother and grandmother as sources of many of her own strengths. “My grandmother, for instance, made beautiful, intricate quilts and enjoyed solving puzzles. I believe I got much of my desire to figure out problems and find solutions from her. My mother has always been my best friend and is full of wisdom, and she takes care of my kids when needed so I can have a career. Thanks mom!”

At Brosamer, “Cindy (Lundquist) and Linda (Brosamer) have been wonderful mentors because they’re kind, knowledgeable

and patient. They’ve taught me so much and they’ve been generous with their time, allowing me to grow the way I want to grow.

“Linda groomed me for IT because my specialty was the AS400 I Series accounting system, the old TrueLine system. She passed on her wealth of knowledge to me. So, I became the system operator, where I would upgrade the operating system, put in the patches, and make sure it was up and running all the time.”

When Farid Saddik joined as CIO in 1999, Laura’s life was again enriched.

“When I began working

with Farid, I didn’t come in with specific IT skills,” says Laura. “I had system experience and I understood our data. But, Farid is the true visionary of the IT operations and I’ve learned a great deal about IT from him and from Mike Manela, our network manager. Farid has shared his wonderful ideas of how we can streamline our business processes, which planted the seeds for what I am working toward accomplishing today.”

Through evolution, Laura found her way into the world of IT, and is grateful.

“I do a lot of research and read the manuals, and I’m fortunate to be surrounded by intelligent people who are very hard-working,” Laura says. “We are all one big team, and I have had a lot of help from many people along the way.”

Because others have helped shape her life, she maintains a philosophy of giving back, and is inspired to mentor others by helping them understand the value of education and ownership.

“I look, listen, observe, and absorb,” says Laura. “But most importantly, I take responsibility for and ownership of my work today and the projects ahead. So, being here in this IT environment right now and during this huge conversion to Contract Manager, is a natural fit for me and for the company.

“I’m honored that the Brosamers have put their trust in me, and that they have grown a talented team of people with a can-do attitude across all fronts.”

# MESSAGE FROM BOB BROSAMER



**T HIS NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS OUR ADOPTION OF A 21ST-CENTURY ACCOUNTING SYSTEM. THE 34-YEAR-OLD TMC, OR TRUeline, SYSTEM HAS SERVED US WELL.**

This step up in system functionality couldn't be more timely. We anticipate a growth in revenues of 10 to 20 percent a year for the next five years.

The just-announced infrastructure program of the Obama administration is much more than a short-term jobs program. It is the start of a long-overdue rebuilding of the country's core infrastructure. The investment that the company has made in recruitment and training will pay tremendous dividends as this work hits the street.

The construction market in 2008 was very competitive. We had two low bids and five seconds out of 26 bids that we submitted. We're much more optimistic about 2009. We've increased our estimating staff and there is significantly more work to bid.

As we build our backlog back up we need to keep focus on the safe jobsite. The new employees that come on board to build this work need to be mentored and trained. Partner

up with the new guy and make sure he or she gets it.  
Best wishes to all of you and your families in 2009.

## MEET OUR NEW EMPLOYEES

### HITEN MAGUDIA

Hiten began working for R&L in July of 2008. He is a Field Engineer, currently working in the Walnut Creek office.

While completing school, Hiten worked initially as an intern and then part-time at Montgomery Watson Harza, an environmental engineering company. He worked with its cost estimating and construction management divisions.

Walnut Creek has been home to Hiten for 19 years. He completed both his undergraduate schooling at UC Berkeley in civil engineering and his master's in civil engineering/project management.

Hiten's parents were born in Kenya, and he and his older sister were born in London, England. His sister is in the third year of her M.D./Ph.D program at Cornell University Medical School. Currently Hiten has no pets, but he would seriously consider getting a pot-belly pig if he had the house/yard space and the opportunity.

Running, hiking, and snowboarding are a few activities Hiten enjoys when away from work. He is also an avid NBA fan and follows college football ("Go Bears!"). He enjoys a good book on occasion and, when he can, traveling to various locations, whether locally or internationally. He is looking forward to traveling around South America for his next big trip.

Hiten is finding his work with R&L to be stimulating, while enjoying the interaction of helpful and interesting co-workers. He is looking forward to broadening his knowledge and



becoming more familiar with the construction industry, and working on challenging and interesting jobs.

**Recommended places to visit:** Recently Hiten returned from a six-week vacation throughout Asia (Japan, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia and Taiwan). His favorite place was Japan; the people and culture are amazing.

### JOSHUA ADAMS

Joshua began working for R&L the end of August 2008. He is supporting our IT Department.

Being a child of a military person, he moved frequently. However, he did manage to put down some roots long enough to attend the University of Hawaii as an American history major.

Josh and Amanda, his lovely wife, have a daughter, Halley Joy, who is 14 months old. They also have one very large cat, who they call Fatboy, or Fatso.

In his spare time, Josh enjoys spending time with his family, surfing, hiking and an occasional video game.

As IT support, Josh says that he is always busy. He enjoys the challenge and says, "In this field there is something new every day." He is looking forward to building a future with R&L.

**Recommended places to visit:** Hawaii, Japan, Guam, London, San Diego, Oregon, Texas and Oklahoma.



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## ***R&L Singers rock the holiday spirit***

**H**OLIDAY TIME WITH R&L IS A SPECIAL TIME OF YEAR. EMPLOYEES LOOK FORWARD TO THIS EVENT TO CELEBRATE AND SPEND time with co-workers. This year our event team created a winter wonderland theme that was very elegant. We have a group of hard-working people who enjoy having a good time.

During the year we go about our business interacting with our various jobs and departments. After awhile we fool ourselves into thinking we know what commonalties they share; then, to our delight, we find a treasure of talent that is shining just below the surface.

The R&L Singers were comprised of H/R, Accounting,

Safety, Insurance, Operations, Property Mgmt, Field office, and our IT Departments. The planning and practicing was a very covert operation. How these 13 women from eight different departments quietly coordinated their talents is still a mystery.

It was quite impressive to see them enter our holiday party in their sky-blue robes. We knew we were in for a treat and we certainly felt very special once their voices lifted in unison.

Their program was a great reminder for us all to enjoy life, press through the challenges, and step out of your comfort zone from time to time and laugh often.

What a joyous way to end the year.

## **NEW FAMILY MEMBERS**

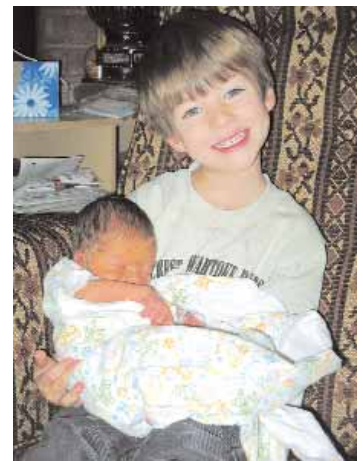
**C**ongratulations to **John and Antonieta Gasiorowski**, whose son, Joseph John, was born October 22, 2008; to **Judy Beedon**, whose grand-son, Jackson Lee McDonald, was born Oct. 23, 2008 to her daughter, Tricia and her husband, Derick; and to **Muhammad and Rabia Naz Aziz**, whose son, Shawaiz Aziz, was born October 25, 2008.



**Joseph John Gasiorowski**



**Shawaiz Aziz**



**Jackson Lee McDonald**

# Holiday Party 2008 highlights



**R&L Singers:** Back (L to R): Rita Bustos, Patty Manager, Pam Shirley, Joan Fuss, Sheena Shirley; Middle (L-R): Donna Engler, Gail Williams, Beverly Archie; Front (L-R): Kathy Verello, Teresa Rebman, Sue Blair, Cathy Wisner, Lillian Simon.



**Ten-Year awards**  
Back (L to R): Jim Miller, Lucas Carver; Middle (L-R): Jose Escobedo, Sandi Nethercott, Farid Saddik; Front: Beverly Archie.



**Five-year awards**  
(L-R): Tom Pham, Clark Benjamin, Stacie Benjamin.

## THE SAFETY ZONE

# LOOKING BACK . . . AND LOOKING FORWARD

**I****N 2008 WE WERE SUCCESSFUL IN REDUCING OUR LOST-TIME INJURY RATE TO** less than 1.00. The national average is well over 3.00. Our frequency rates have reduced to national levels of around 6.00.

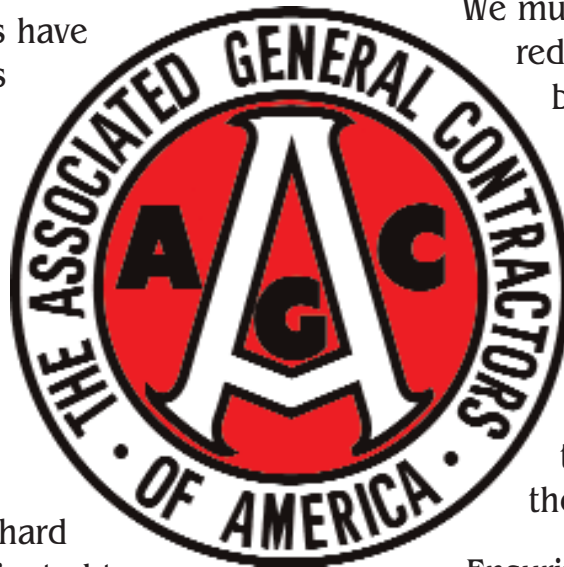
Due to our work in creating a solid safety process, we were awarded 3rd place in the California Statewide Safety Awards competition for AGC.

As a result of everyone's hard work, we have been nominated to represent ourselves and our industry in the AGC National Safety Awards Competition. This is quite an honor and accomplishment. This nomination illustrates to our peers across the country the excellent safety work each of our employees practices day in and day out.

This is truly great news for our safety and health effort, but it is essential to elevate our efforts even more. Our frequency of incidents is average, but we are not an average contractor, and many clients demand only above-average contractors working for them.

Our goal is, and must continue to be, continual improvement. Continuing to

identify risky behaviors and watching out for each other so that each employee goes home safely each night must continue to be a primary part of our culture.



We must focus not only on reducing serious accidents, but the minor ones as well. In order to achieve that, we must focus on those activities that have contributed to higher than average frequency of incidents and work to eliminate the risks in those areas. Some of these areas include:

- Ensuring we have good safe access to all of our work areas
- Improving housekeeping in all areas
- Continuing our emphasis on working safely around mobile equipment
- Improving hazard identification and control within the JHA process and in our daily work procedures.

Our incentive programs are being modified to begin targeting the frequency of OSHA recordable incidents and the behaviors that lead to them. By doing this and continuing to place an emphasis on being prepared and improved task planning, we will attain our goal of an injury-free workplace.