

Lodge-ical News – March 2006

We know this comes at a time when many of you are gearing up to open your doors for the spring/summer season. This is our busy season too as we are working on version 7.0 upgrades and working with new clients.

North American Gamebird Association (NAGA) Trade Show

I will be in Nashville at the 74th Annual NAGA convention (April 3-5). If you plan on attending the show, please make sure you come visit me in the exhibit hall. I have been asked to give a presentation on the advantages of recordkeeping and how to streamline your office operations. This presentation is scheduled for Tuesday afternoon.

Version 7.0 Scheduling

We are now booking version 7.0 upgrades for June. If you are interested in this upgrade, please contact us as soon as possible.

User Tip: Scheduling Employees

Every version of Lodge-ical has the ability to assign one or more employees to a guest activity. Clients are using this to schedule fishing guides, wranglers, and dog handlers. If you are not using this feature you should consider doing so.

If you do use this feature, you can plan your upcoming weeks knowing what employees are needed. If you work with contract employees, this is especially important as your contract employees call you asking for their work schedule. At the end of the season (or any time during) you can run an employee statistic report to see how many employees you have booked over a period of time. The report will show you the number of people participating in an activity and the number of employees required.

Version 7.0 Feature Preview

Regarding Employee scheduling, version 7.0 has been enhanced to include the following:

- Employee Request checkbox – if an employee has been requested, you can indicate this so that you make sure you don't reassign him/her to another activity.
- Scheduled Employee Calendar – we include a graphical calendar showing employees who are booked to particular activities. This calendar, sorted by employee last name, is easy to read and if the employee is requested by a guest, the calendar will display that particular guest activity in the color red to differentiate it from a "non-requested" activity.
- Employee Priority – on the initial employee setup form, you can assign a numeric priority code to each employee. When displaying the calendar you can choose to sort the calendar by priority code (vs. employee last name).
- Employee Statistic report – this report, described above, will show you how many times an employee was requested.

User Tip: How to maintain and care for your Lodge-ical database – Part 1

As part of your version 7.0 upgrade, we will be asking you to email us your data file. Your data has to go through a conversion process which allows us to migrate your data with your new code. This process has opened our eyes to how clients are using (or not using) their database. In certain cases, when you receive your upgrade, we might include a sheet that gives you suggestions and notes regarding YOUR database.

One thing we want to bring attention to is the ability to enter a value into a field that is not part of a dropdown window. For example, consider the Client Entry form with its dropdowns, i.e. Client Type, Inquiry Type, Referral Source, Level of Interest, Staff Contact, etc. Prior to version 7.0, we allowed you to enter a value that did not match a pick in the dropdown. Turns out this was not a good decision on our part. The advantage of selecting from a dropdown window is that these fields start to contain data that is similar to other records in the database. This similarity makes it easy for you to query your database looking for people with the same characteristics. Each time someone enters a value that does not match a value set up in a corresponding Maintenance table; your database becomes less valuable. Another advantage is that since the item is coming from a Maintenance table, it allows you to simply type in the first few characters and the desired entry will appear in the dropdown box.

Version 7.0 Feature Preview

Version 7.0 will not allow you to enter a value into a field that does not exist in a dropdown list (at any time you can add/inactivate items through the Maintenance menu). Some of you may experience growing pains as you are encountering this new feature. But we guarantee that you WILL eventually appreciate this "limitation".

Think of Lodge-ical as a tool for analysis and planning. It does more than allow you to do your daily data entry. But to get an accurate picture of your business the database is only as good as the data being entered. Please be sure all of your employees who use Lodge-ical understand its value and know the rules of data entry.