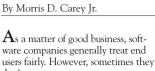
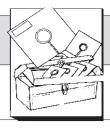
## STATE-OF-THE-ART CONTRACTOR

# Software Support Lost



One such case is the decision by Computer Associates of San Jose, Calif., to discontinue support of its BPI Entry Level accounting system. This decision essentially means hundreds of contractors must now spend thousands of dollars on new accounting software.

BPI was one of two accounting programs made by small companies that were sold by IBM in the early 1980s. Both BPI and the software made by Peachtree Software Inc. included job costing capabilities, which became very popular. Because IBM is so respected (and because the programs were pretty darn good), both of them sold like hot cakes. By the mid-1980s, BPI had earned a reputation as one of the most used accounting programs in the country.



What made BPI so popular was that it was almost mistake proof; was constantly being improved; and it was easy to learn with good, consistent menus and reasonably well-documented manuals. Best of all for contractors, it had job-cost accounting. The jobcost module could also be used for estimating. It was simple, but effective.

By the late '80s, BPI got into financial trouble and was bought by Computer Associates. After the purchase, Computer Associates released a few modifications to the software, revised the user manuals and continued to support the program — including annual payroll tax-table updates (at BPI's regular price of \$125 per year). In my estimation, the transfer of ownership was handled very professionally, and technical support service continued to be quite good.

Now, however, Computer Associates has notified BPI users that 1991 will be the last year for payroll tax-

Small System Design Inc.

800/272-0053

Basic System with

(CMS)

2540 Frontier Ave., Suite 104 Boulder, Colorado 80301

Construction Management Software

System Includes:
GL/JC/AP/AR
Basic System .......\$3,495

Payroll .....\$700 Multi-State Payroll .....\$850

Estimating & Scheduling....\$1,995

table updates. Without tax-table updates in 1992, the payroll program will be unusable, which makes it impractical to use the rest of the program for accounting, estimating, and job costing.

Computer Associates is offering BPI users the option of converting to one of two whole new accounting systems. The basic one would cost about \$1,200 for four modules (general ledger, payroll, accounts receivable and accounts payable). The price isn't too bad, and data from existing BPI files can be automatically converted to the new program. Unfortunately, the new program doesn't work anything like the old one. It has different menus and requires different keystrokes to operate it. But the biggest drawback is that it doesn't come with job costing. Without job costing, it wouldn't be much good for most contractors. The second choice is what Computer Associates calls "an upgrade" to their ACPAC accounting system, that does include a job-cost module. The conversion price, however, is a hefty \$4,000.

Neither choice seems very fair to me. One is less the job-cost ability, and the other costs six to ten times as much as a typical upgrade. I have asked Computer Associates if they will release information on the dis-

Construction Manager

continued program pertaining to upgrading payroll tax tables. They said that they won't and declined to say why.

Essentially, those users who require job costing will have to pay \$4,000 for the Computer Associates upgrade. Or, they must find another system at the same or greater cost, learn how to use it, and finally reenter historic data into that system by hand (which could cost additional thousands of dollars in time).

For those of you who are looking for an accounting system, there may be a lesson to be learned from the actions of Computer Associates: Choose a software vendor carefully. Consider how long the company has been in business as well as how dependent you will be on that vendor for support.

There are several other terrific accounting programs listed in the accompanying boxes.

Morris D. Carey is a partner with Carey Bros. Construction, a remodeling firm based in Pittsburg, Calif. In addition, he has reviewed hundreds of constructionrelated computer products and conducts computer seminars. If you have a question about computing in construction, address it to State-of-the-Art Contractor, ILC, RR#2, Box 146, Richmond, VT 05477.

## Accounting Programs

### Construction Data Control Inc. (CDCI) A Weyerhaeuser Affiliate

3675 Crestwood Pkwy., Suite 400 Duluth, Georgia 30136 800/221-3929

Profit Builder - Version 6.9 System Includes: JĆ/GL/AP/AR/PR/PO/SC/AIA/ T&M BILLING/RW Basic System JC/GL/AP.....\$3,995 AR/AIA/SC/RW (each) .....\$500 PR/PO (each) .....\$1,500 Estimating ......\$2,995 Annual Maintenance .....\$600

System Includes: JC/GL/AP/AR/PR/RW/T&M BILLING Basic System JC/GL/AP/AR\$1,995 Estimating .....\$1,995 All other modules (each).....\$500 Annual Maintenance....\$500

Basic Builder II

Professional Subcontractor System Includes: JĆ/GL/AP/AR/PR/RW/T&M BILLING Basic System JC/GL/AP/AR\$1,995 Estimating ......\$1,995

All other modules (each)......\$500 Annual Maintenance.....\$500

Job Systems Inc. 2884 Walnut Hill Ln. Dallas, Texas 75229 214/351-5627

Job\$ - Job Oriented Business System System Includes: GL/PR/JC/AP/AR/EST/SCHED/ **EXPORT** Basic System GL/JC/AP......\$645 All other modules ......\$300 each

Estimating .....\$495

Updates ......\$50

Estimating \$4,990
Periodic Update \$200 Service Contract ......\$795-\$995 (includes free updates) Construction Management Software Plus (CMS Plus) System Includes: GL/JC/AP/AR/PO/BILLING Basic System ......\$6,295 Inventory module .....\$995 Estimating & Scheduling....\$1,995 Basic System with Estimating .....\$7,790 Periodic Update .....\$200 Service Contract ..........\$795-\$995 (includes free updates and free telephone support) Software Shop Systems Route 34 PO Box 728 Farmingdale, New Jersey 07727 800/554-9865 Construction System System Includes: GL/AP/JC Basic System .......\$2,995 with PR/AR/IC......\$6,695 Annual Updates (per module)\$110 Annual Support ......\$495-\$800

System Includes: GL/AP/JC With digitizer.....\$7,295 Annual Maintenance (per module) ......\$110 Annual Support .....\$495-\$800 Omware Inc. 100 Pleasant Hill Ave. North Sebastapol, California 95472 800/726-6278 Master Builder Series — Version 5 Job Management System System Includes: GL/AP/AR/PR/JC/BUDGET & BID Basic System .....\$2,500 Update.....\$60 Master Builder Series — Version 5 Business Master

System Includes: Job Management System modules plus AIA Billing, Certified Variable Rate PR, Multicompany Financial, Contract Management (Change Orders), and Estimating

Basic System ......\$4,000 Task Master (scheduler, PO, and specification writing).....\$500 Updates ......\$600

Master Builder Series — Version 5 Advanced Business Master System Includes: Business Master System modules plus Task Master, Équipment Cost-

ing & Equipment Maintenance, and Daily Payroll Basic System ......\$5,000 Updates ......\$600

Timberline Software PO Box 728

Beaverton, Oregon 97075 503/644-8155 Medallion Builder System Includes: GL/JC/AP/RW

Accounts Receivable module \$490 Inventory module .....\$1,155 Purchasing Management Estimating module.....\$990 Annual Maintenance .....\$925 (includes free updates)

### **ABBREVIATIONS**

GL = General Ledger

PR = Payroll

JC = Job Cost

AP = Accounts Payable

AR = Accounts Receivable

PO = Purchase Orders

CO = Change Orders

RW = Report Writer

EST = Estimating

SCHED = Scheduling

EXPORT = Data Export to Spread Sheet or other Programs

AIA = AIA Draw Request

IC = Inventory Control

SC = Subcontractor Control