



Automated Rental Management Solutions—Close Up

ARM Paves A Successful Path For Prairie Supply

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Close Up

Contractors across the state of North Dakota call Prairie Supply for everything relating to concrete. Owners Peggy and Bruce Kringlie refer to their growing business as Contractor’s Headquarters. As well as renting heavy equipment like boom lifts and scaffolding, Prairie Supply sells tools and equipment for concrete forming and pouring. The company also offers CAD design services—engineering complex rebar layouts and designing concrete-forming plans.

Mixing Things Up

Peachtree and custom designed rental software were putting a wrench in the company’s success. “When we started we were small, and Peachtree seemed like all we needed,” explains Peggy Kringlie. As the company added locations, products, and employees, the system’s limitations became glaring. “We had no way of knowing what inventory was in stock at our other locations. If we were out of something at one store, we would have to call

and check each of the other locations to see if they had it,” recalls Kringlie. Each location operated as a separate company because of the difficulties of integrating the three separate sets of books, resulting in a large administrative workload for the Kringlies and their staff.

Forming A Solution

Kringlie started her research of a replacement with an Internet search for rental management software. She found Automated Rental Management (ARM), published by

Business Computer Systems (BCS). ARM combines powerful rental management modules with the award-winning MAS 200 accounting software into a comprehensive solution. “ARM essentially offered everything we were looking for at an extremely competitive price,” explains Kringlie. “Other software we analyzed would have required us to change the way we operated, but ARM supports the way we do business.” Kringlie did some more research on MAS 200 and found it consistently ranked high in all reviews. She

learned that both Peachtree and MAS 200 are Best Software products, which provided for a simplified transition between the two.

A consultant from BCS was on site to install and configure ARM, and perform high-level training of the key users. After the staff practiced with ARM for several days, follow-up training took place using Desktop Streaming, with the BCS consultant on the telephone with users. “It takes a lot to impress us,”

Kringlie says, “and ARM and BCS impressed us!”

ARM Delivers Concrete Results

ARM runs over a wide area network connecting the three locations. Inventory warehouses represent each location, and ARM provides an easy method of allowing staff to check the stock levels at every site—even as rental contracts are created.

Before ARM, sales staff had to refer to a printed price list to offer customer-specific pricing on selected items or



With ARM, the staff is able to easily check inventory levels at all three Prairie locations.

product lines. Now, the software utilizes detailed pricing matrices maintained directly within ARM, and automatically calculates the correct pricing as contract information is entered. ARM handles this specific customer pricing, as well as the variable rates for daily, weekly, and monthly rentals. Prairie Supply can choose to vary its rental rates by location, if market conditions warrant. Before ARM, the sales representatives had to confirm the availability of each item ordered by physically checking the stock. The reservation inquiry in ARM lets staff graphically view an item's availability for any date, in any warehouse. "We are much better prepared to respond to inquiries now," says Kringlie.

ARM contracts can contain both rental and sale items, resulting in a more informative contract for the customer, and a more streamlined data entry task for Prairie Supply's staff. "ARM is so manageable," says Kringlie, "Inventory, Reservations, and Billing are all integrated, which allows us to be more efficient and productive."

Prairie Supply tracks much of its equipment by serial number. Using ARM, staff can pinpoint the status and location of each piece of equipment, as well as track the rental revenue, service costs, and number of times rented. Extensive reporting tools keep management continually informed of overdue contracts, upcoming bookings, and even a dynamic Top 25 rental items listing.

In addition to the excellent rental management functionality, Kringlie and her staff appreciate the intuitive accounting features. When researching a customer's account, staff can drill down into a particular invoice and view rental details such as the beginning and ending date of the contract, the billing code, and each item rented or sold. The invoice's current balance and payment history is also available, making it easy to respond to customer ques-

tions. These drill downs are available throughout ARM, providing a comprehensive and cohesive view of related data.

Solid Accounting Functions

MAS 200's flexible General Ledger reports provide Kringlie with an in-depth look at Prairie Supply's finances, from many angles. The Detail by Source Report provides a recap of general ledger transactions sorted by source journal and posting date. Kringlie can select ranges of source journals, batch numbers, and posting dates to obtain a listing of journal postings that allows her to identify relevant transactions. To generate an auditing tool of activity across the three locations, Kringlie prints the General Ledger Detail Report sorted by location.

Prairie Supply purchases a yearly support contract through BCS, entitling the company to unlimited telephone support. "I feel the support contract is well worth the money," says Kringlie. "BCS is the best. The support we receive is excellent—they are attentive, prompt, and knowledgeable." Kringlie also compliments the friendly attitude of BCS's consultants, "They always make me feel like my call is important."

Secure Future

Part of the original appeal of MAS 200 and ARM to Kringlie was the ability to buy just the modules, and thereby the functionality, the company needed. The Kringlies are already making plans to expand the functionality of ARM, gearing up to add payroll direct deposit, credit card processing, and the ARM cash management module for true point of sale/point of rental capabilities. "*We are delighted with ARM,*" says Kringlie. "*We get real value from the system.*"

Headquartered in San Antonio, Texas, our firm has specialized in the rental industry and MAS 90 accounting software since 1986.

Since our firm supports over 200 rental companies like yours, you can be assured of our experience and expertise in solving your business problems.

If you need take control of your rental business, we would like to talk with you to see if Automated Rental Management is the right solution for you.



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