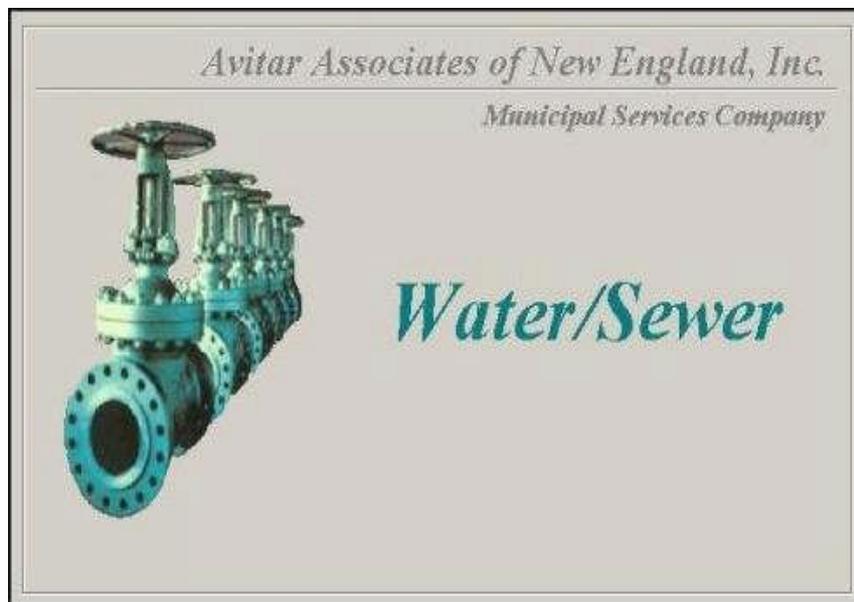




Avitar Associates
Municipal Services Company



Avitar Software Guide

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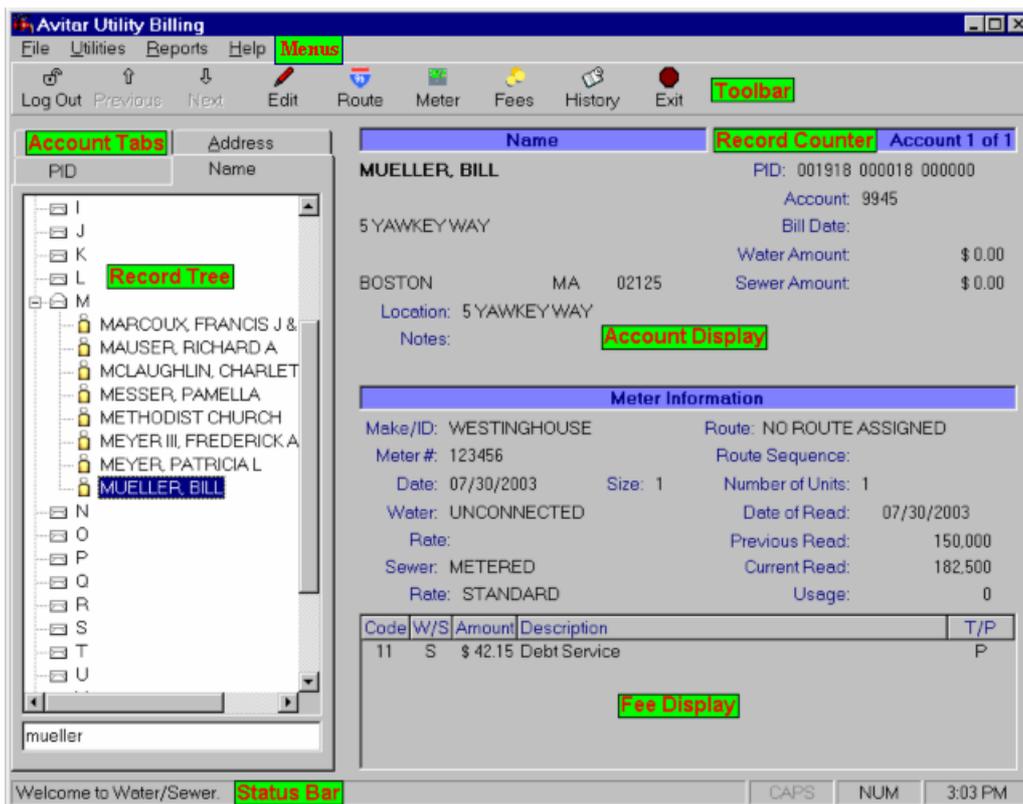
Starting the Application

To start the Utility Billing application, double click on the application short cut on your system's desktop.



Utility Billing Main Window

Below is a picture of the main Utility Billing window. Review the portions labeled in boxes to familiarize you with some of the terms and items that will be referred to throughout this manual.



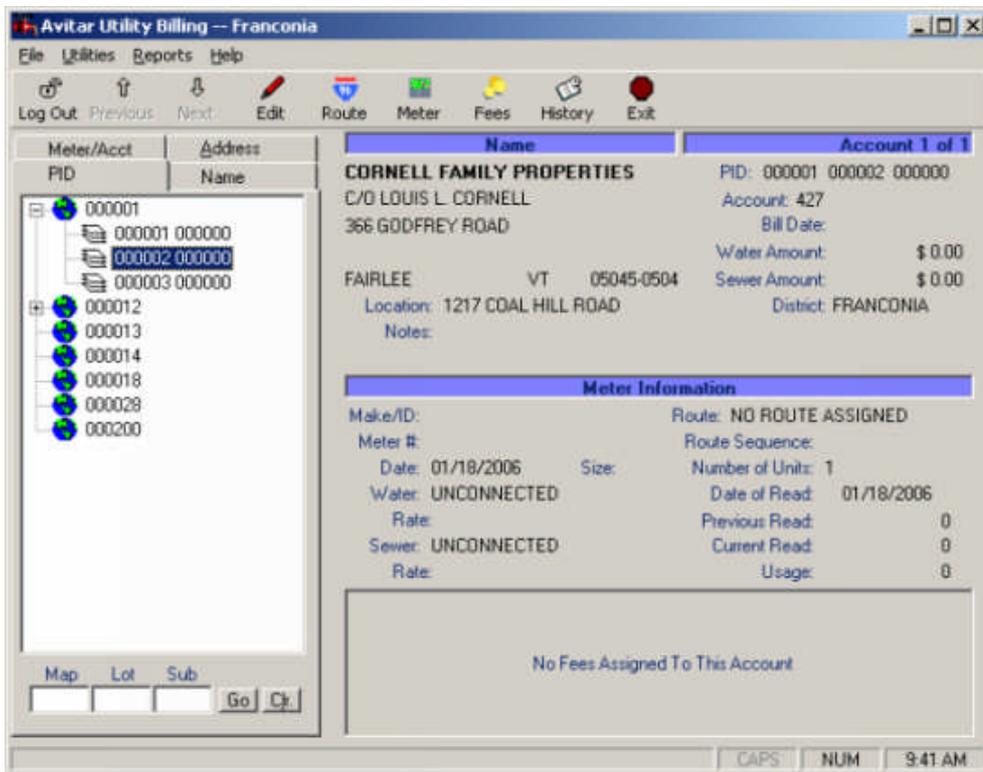
Logging In

In order to browse most account information, you do not need to log in. However, to edit accounts and to perform most tasks, such as printing reports or calculating taxes, you will need to log in using the username and password you were given. Until you log in, most of the items on the toolbar and drop down menus will be disabled.

To Log In, press the Log In button located on the toolbar across the top of the main window. You will be prompted to enter your username and password. Keep in mind that passwords are case-sensitive, such that “ABCDE” is not the same as “abcde”. After successfully logging in, you will notice many of the toolbar buttons and the items from the drop down menus will be enabled (no longer grayed out), depending on the access level associated with your username. Also, notice that the Log In toolbar button now says Log Out. When you are done editing records or printing reports, you can press the Log Out button to prevent further changes to the accounts, and unauthorized use in your absence. Alternatively, you can exit the system using the Exit toolbar button, which will log you out and exit the program.

Locating and Viewing Records

You can access existing accounts through any of the categories listed on the Account Tabs. The basic methods are by account name, by PID (Parcel Identification, usually Map-Lot-Sublot numbers), or by parcel address. All of these categories are displayed within Record Trees. To navigate the Record Trees, simply click on the appropriate top level to display the corresponding subcategory. For example, the PID Record Tree might show a top level grouping of "000001" corresponding to Tax Map #1. With a click, this then expands to show all lots on Map #1. (Note: Map, Lot and Sublot are maintained with six characters for each value, such that Map 1 Lot 2 Sublot 3 would appear as "000001 000002 000000" as shown below):



Once the second level of the Record Tree has been selected, all accounts matching that category will be displayed on the Account Display of the main window. If multiple accounts match the selected category (e.g. three accounts under the same name), the first account will be displayed and the Record Counter will indicate how many other accounts have been found (e.g. "Account 1 of 3"). To display subsequent accounts use the Next button on the toolbar and notice as the Record Counter will scroll through the set of records indicating which is displayed. To move back in the set of records, use the Previous button. You can also use the Meter/Acct Account Tab to search for a specific account(s) by account number, meter number, route name, or billing category.

File Menu

Refresh Lists

The Record Tree lists on the Access Tabs of the main window, display lists of every record in the database within the selected category. (For example: PID's on Tax Map "000001" or Owners beginning with "A"). As you add and delete accounts, the system will automatically refresh the lists to reflect changes to the database. If however, you cannot find an account that you know exists or conversely see names or PID's listed for accounts that have been deleted, you can select Refresh Lists from the File menu to force the system to re-query the database for a list of accounts.

Backing Up Your Data

In most towns, your data will be configured to back up automatically each night. However, sometimes it's nice to be able to backup your data to send to Avitar or keep on your workstation without having to go to your file server. You can create a backup of your data by selecting Backup Database from the File menu.

You will be prompted to identify a location where you want to save the backup file. You can choose a location on your hard drive or your floppy drive. If the backup file is too large to fit on a single floppy disk, you will be prompted to insert subsequent disks until the backup is complete.

In the event you need to restore the data from your backup, call Avitar for assistance, but before doing so, make a new backup of your current data. This is a precaution in the event your backup file you wish to restore from is an older one than you thought. In which case, you can restore from the one you just did, in order to get back where you were prior to attempting to restore.

Print Setup

This allows you to select printer and printer settings for use with the program.

Utilities Menu

Add Account

The process of adding new accounts to the system begins by selecting Utilities | Add Account. The dialog box for adding new accounts is virtually identical to the dialog box used to edit existing accounts and easily understandable as to what data goes where. The tab button will walk you through the entry in order or click with the mouse to skip fields not needed. Drop down arrows will open a menu of accepted entries to select from based on your town set-up.

Add New Account

Account Information

Map Lot Sub
PID:
 Update Owner Information from Assessing
Owner: ...
Address:
Town: FRANCONIA NH 03580
Number Street Name
Location:
Route: NO ROUTE ASSIGNED
District: NONE
Notes:

Meter Information

Account: 429
Meter Make:
Meter #:
Meter Date: 02/01/2006
Meter Size:
Number of Units: 1
Water Bill Type: Unconnected
Water Rate:
Sewer Bill Type: Unconnected
Sewer Rate:
Date of Read: 02/01/2006
Previous Read: 0
Current Read: 0
Usage: 0

Fees button: This allows you to add fees to the account being added.

Close button: This allows you to close the Add New Account screen without saving.

Add button: This will add the record to the master file.

Close Account

The Close Account function is designed to help you with the process of issuing a final bill to an account when the account holder changes prior to your next scheduled billing process. To use the function, first select the account on the main screen and then select Utilities | Close Account.

The first screen of the Close Account process displays the current account holder information on the account and allows you to enter the name and address of the new account holder. You can also update or add any notes on the account and indicate whether you wish for the billing information to be updated in the future based on information maintained for that PID in the Avitar Assessing database. If you chose to update the information automatically you should make sure that the new account holder's information is to be updated in the Assessing database or else the information will revert back to the previous account holder the next time you import owner information from Assessing. After entering the information for the new account holder press Next.

The second screen allows you to determine the bill amount for the final bill to the previous account holder. This is separated into two sections: Fee Billing and Rate Billing (i.e. the normal flat and/or metered bill amounts). If the account does not have any fees, the Fee Billing section will be disabled.

If there are fees attached to the account you can choose under the Fee Billing section how the fees should be apportioned between the previous and the new account holders. You can elect to 1) bill all of the fees to the previous account holder, 2) bill all of the fees to the new account holder, or 3) enter a percentage of the fees that should be billed to the previous account holder. For example, if the change of account happens two months into a quarterly billing cycle, you might choose to bill 67% of the fees to the previous account holder. The remaining 33% will be reflected on the new account holder's bill during your next standard billing cycle. Note that if the account has multiple fees assigned, all of the fees will be treated the same, based on your choice.

The Rate Billing section will offer different options as determined by the type of water and/or sewer billing rules assigned to the account. If the account has either metered water or a metered sewer billing type you will be able to enter the final reading for the account at the time of the close. If the account has either flat water or a flat sewer billing type you again will be able to enter a percentage of the total amount for a normal billing cycle that should be billed to the previous account holder. Again, using the scenario listed above, if the change of account happens two months into a quarterly billing cycle, you might choose to bill 67% of the standard flat rate to the previous account holder. The remaining 33% of the standard flat rate will be reflected on the new account holder's bill during your

next standard billing cycle. Note that if the account has a metered water billing type and a flat sewer billing type (or vice versa) you will need to enter both a final reading and a percentage. Once you have entered all information press Next.

The final screen of the Close Account process shows you the final bill amount for the previous account holder and allows you to enter the additional billing information that will appear on the final bill. Verify that the bill amounts are correct and then enter the bill setup information. The bill setup information is virtually identical to the bill setup screen for producing bills for a standard billing cycle. You need to enter dates for the billing period for the final closing bill, a due date for the closing bill, and whether you wish the bill to include an interest rate or a flat penalty for late payments. You can use the two message lines to include any extra information to appear on the bill, and you should confirm the return address and tax collector office hour's information. Once you have verified all of the required bill information press Print Closing Bill to produce the actual final bill to be sent to the previous account holder. After printing the bill press Print Tax Collector Supplement to produce a one page supplement sheet that provides all of the information necessary for your tax collector to supplement the final bill into the tax collections system. The printed supplement includes a copy of the final closing bill in addition to instructions for the tax collector for supplementing the final bill amount.

After you have printed the final bill for the previous account holder and the tax collector supplement press Finish completing the process. The new account holder information and any fee or billing changes are not actually saved to the database until you press Finish. If you press Close instead of Finish you will be prompted that none of your changes have been saved and you should discard any printed final bill or tax collector supplement.

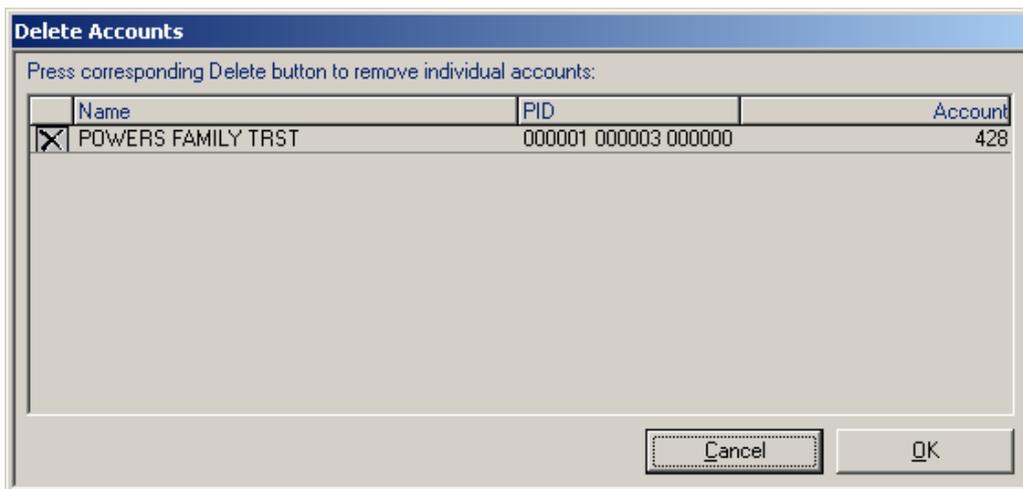
If the account is based strictly on metered water and/or sewer billing types and does not have any fees that were billed in part or in total to the previous account holder, then the only changes made to the account going forward will be the new account holder information and a new Previous Read value (equal to the Final Meter Reading value you provided during the Close Account process). The revised Previous Read value will be used in conjunction with the Final Read to be entered at the time of the next standard billing cycle to calculate the bill for the new account holder. If, however, the account had either a flat water billing type, a flat sewer billing type, or fees that were billed either in part or in total to the previous account holder you should notice a temporary fee that was added to the account by the Close Account process. The "fee" will appear as "Acct. Change Credit" and will actually be for a negative amount. This is necessary to credit the new account holder's upcoming bill to reflect the portion of the fees and/or flat rate billing amounts that were billed to the previous account holder. The credit is

added as a Temporary fee that will automatically be removed after the next bill is calculated and finalized. The temporary credit should never produce a negative total bill amount for the new account holder's next bill unless you manually remove Permanent fees that were on the account at the time of the issuance of the final bill or reduce the rate for that account's flat billing types (unlikely).

NOTE: If you just need to update the account holder information without issuing an interim closing bill then you should use the Edit button on the main screen to make the changes; you do not need to go through the Close Account process.

Delete Account

To delete an account, first locate and display the accounts on the main window using the Account Tabs and Record Trees. With the account(s) displayed, select Utilities | Delete Account. The Delete Account dialog box is pictured below:



In the Delete Accounts dialog box you will see a list of the accounts in the current record set. Often times this set will include more than one account. To actually delete an account, identify the account to be deleted making sure to confirm it by the PID and/or Account number and click on the delete icon to the left of the record (button with the "X"). Once you click on the Delete Icon, the record disappears, but have no fear it is not gone yet! Press "OK" to confirm the deletions (now they are gone!), or press "Cancel" to exit without deleting the accounts. You will get a confirmation request if you attempt to cancel after selecting records for deletion. Once you have deleted an account there is no way to undo it, other than restoring from an earlier backup or manually reentering the account information.

Edit Account

To edit an account, you must first select the account using the Account Tabs. With the account displayed, press the Edit toolbar button to view the Edit Account dialog box pictured:

Account Information			Meter Information		
PID:	Map: 000001	Lot: 000001	Sub: 000000	Account:	426
<input type="checkbox"/>	Update Owner Information from Assessing			Meter Make:	
Owner:	OTOROWSKI FAMILY 1996 REV TRST			Meter #:	
Address:	11518 TYLER PLACE			Meter Date:	01/18/2006
Town:	BAINBRIDGE IS.	WA	98110-9811	Meter Size:	
Location:	Number: 845	Street Name: COAL HILL ROAD		Number of Units:	1
Route:	NO ROUTE ASSIGNED			Water Bill Type:	Unconnected
District:	FRANCONIA			Water Rate:	
Notes:				Sewer Bill Type:	Unconnected
				Sewer Rate:	
				Date of Read:	01/18/2006
				Previous Read:	0
				Current Read:	0
				Usage:	0

All data items are well labeled and relatively straight forward. To edit, simply click on the item to be edited and edit as needed, or use the tab key to move from field to field in sequence. Some items of interest for your editing ease to keep in mind are as follows:

- When entering the Map, Lot and Sublot of the PID, you do not need to enter the leading zeros.
- When moving away from the Sublot text box, you may be prompted whether you want to use the information maintained in the Avitar Assessing database to populate the owner address and location fields (provided you are on the same network as the assessing database). Simply answer “Yes” and the owner information and parcel location will be populated, if a match is found. Answer “No” to manually enter the information.

- The Update Owner Information from Assessing check box allows you to indicate whether the account's owner information should be updated based on future changes made within the assessing database to the same PID (again provided you are on the same network as the assessing database). If you do not want changes in the assessing database to be reflected on the account, simply un-check the box. You might choose to do so if the Water/Sewer bill is to be sent to a tenant rather than the owner of the selected PID.
- You can press the browse button (to the right of the owner name text box) to view a list of all other accounts maintained in the system. This can simplify the process of adding or editing multiple accounts for a single owner by copying owner and address information from existing accounts.
- Location Street Names can either be typed in or selected from the drop down list of existing street name. By selecting names from the existing list, you can help standardize street names which will make the Address Record Tree on the main window easier to navigate.
- If you select a Water or Sewer Bill Type other than "Unconnected" or "No Charge", you will need to select one of the corresponding Rates for the selected Type.
- You can also edit Fee information for the selected account by pressing the Fees button. (Consult the section "Assigning Fees to an Account" for more information on fees).
- To save your changes and exit the dialog box press "OK". To exit without saving your changes press "Cancel".

currently assigned to the selected account, while the bottom grid displays a list of all of the standard fees that could be applied to the selected account.

You can assign a standard fee to an account in one of two ways. First, you can highlight the fee in the bottom grid by selecting it and then press the Apply Fee button. Or alternatively, you can just double click on the fee in the bottom grid. To delete an assigned fee from an account, first select the fee by clicking on the fee's corresponding record selector within the top grid (the gray box down the left-most column pictured above). With the fee to be deleted highlighted, press the Delete key on your keyboard to remove the assigned fee. Alternatively, double clicking the record selection will prompt you to delete.

If the fee you need to assign does not exist yet, you can press the New Fee button to access the Edit Standard Fees dialog box. For more information on creating standard fees, consult the section above.

Note: In order to maintain consistency with earlier versions of the application, it is possible to create a fee within the top grid of the Assign Fees dialog box that does not exist as a standard fee. You can just type in a new code and enter an amount and a description and indicate whether it is Water or Sewer and Temporary or Permanent. However, as this precludes you from globally updating the fee in the future, the preferred method of assigning fees is to first create a standard fee definition and then assign that standard fee to individual accounts.

Edit Billing Rules

The billing rules allow you to create numerous methods for calculating due amounts for a wide array of different types of accounts. To create or edit billing rules, select Edit Billing Rules from the Utilities menu. You can create different billing rules for water and sewer accounts, as well as for one of three bill types:

Flat Billing Rules: Flat billing rules are rules in which the account's unit's value is multiplied by a flat amount to determine the bill amount. A Flat billing type can also have a minimum bill amount.

Seasonal Billing Rules: Seasonal billing rules are just like flat billing rules, except that the accounts can be billed on a separate, seasonal warrant.

Metered Billing Rules: Metered billing rules are rules in which the account's usage (as determined by meter readings) is multiplied by a rate (or rates) to determine the bill amount. A Metered billing rules can also incorporate a Flat billing rate, in addition to a minimum bill amount.

Creating a New Billing Rule

To create a new billing rule from within the Edit Billing Rules dialog box, press New... Next you will need to select the category of tax you want to create (either Water or Sewer), as well as the type of billing to be created (Flat, Metered, or Seasonal).

The screenshot shows the 'Edit Billing Rules' dialog box with the following fields and values:

- Billing Rule: WMO
- Type of Billing: METERED WATER
- Rule Description: (empty)
- Flat Amount: 50.0000
- Minimum Amount: 0.00
- Units of Measure: 100
- Units Label: Gal.

	Rate Per Unit	Up To x Units
▶	\$ 2.5400	

Buttons: New..., Delete Rule, Add Rate, Save, Close

Finally, you can enter a rule description and press “OK” to add the rule. Once the new rule is added, you can edit it just as you would an existing rule as outlined in the next section EDITING A BILLING RULE.

Edit Billing Rules

To edit an existing billing rule, first select the rule from the “Billing Rule” drop down list. The rules attributes will be displayed below, depending upon the type of rules selected. All billing rules have a Rule Description used to refer to the rule, as well as a Flat Amount and a Minimum Amount. Metered rules have several additional attributes. These include a Units of Measure value, which refers to the units in which the rates are entered, for example \$0.625 per 1000 gallons. Also included is a unit’s label that will appear on the bill. Units label values might be “gal” or “cu ft” depending upon your meters. Finally, all Metered rates require you to enter the Rate per Unit, as well as a range of units for the given rate, for example \$0.625 per 1000, up to the maximum billable amount. Your Metered rules can have multiple rates associated with different ranges of usage. For example, in the rule pictured above the minimum bill is \$25 and the bill is based on \$.53/unit of usage no matter how much. You can set a limit instead of maximum, say 75,000 units and then set a different rate for usage over 75,000 units.

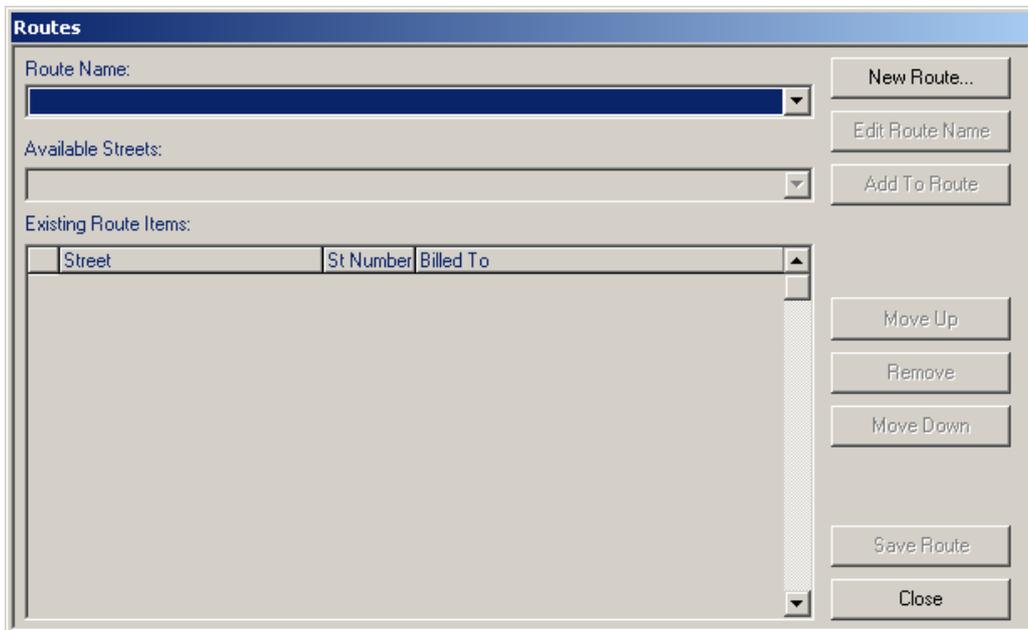
Deleting a Billing Rule

If you wish to delete a rule, first select the rule from the Billing Rule drop down list. Then press Delete Rule. The system will check all accounts to verify that the rule is no longer assigned to any accounts. If the rule is not in use, you will be asked to confirm the deletion, and once confirmed the rule will be deleted

Edit Routes

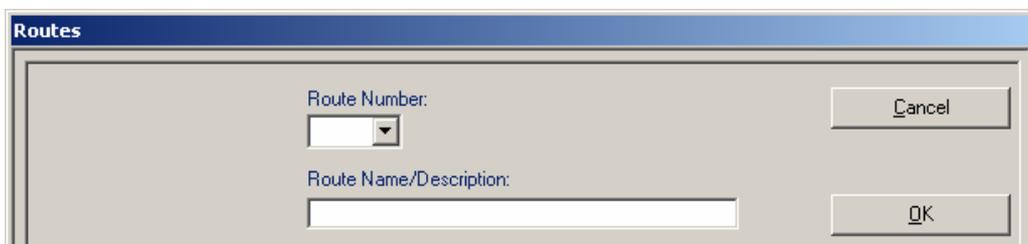
The Utility Billing system enables you to manage your accounts by categorizing them into specific routes. You can then produce reports or process readings based on your routes.

To create a new route, select Utilities| Edit Routes and the following screen appears:



Street	St Number	Billed To
--------	-----------	-----------

Then click the New Route button and the screen below will appear:



Select a route number from the drop down menu; this will display only numbers

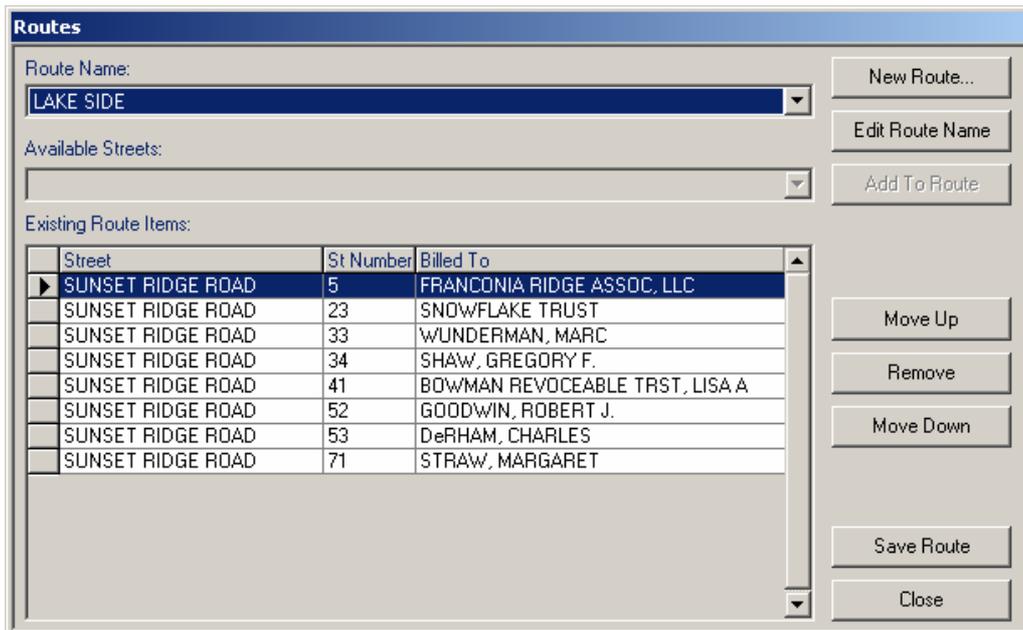
not previously used for a route. then enter a route name or description by which you will refer to your new route and click the OK button to add the route and you will then be able to now add accounts to your new route. This screen then clears and you are now back at the previous Edit Routes screen. From here, you can open the Route Name drop down window and select the new route you just created or any route in the list to edit. In either case, you can then open the Available Streets drop down menu and select a street to add to the route.

Once selected, click the Add to Route button and something similar to the following screen will appear:

The screenshot shows a software window titled "Routes". At the top, there is a "Route Name:" field with a dropdown menu currently showing "TOWN CENTER". To the right of this field are three buttons: "New Route...", "Edit Route Name", and "Add To Route". Below the route name field is an "Available Streets:" field with a dropdown menu. Underneath that is a section titled "Existing Route Items:" which contains a table with three columns: "Street", "St Number", and "Billed To". The first row in the table is highlighted in blue. To the right of the table are four buttons: "Move Up", "Remove", "Move Down", and "Save Route". At the bottom right of the window is a "Close" button.

Street	St Number	Billed To
MAIN STREET	35	SAULS, JEAN M.
MAIN STREET	53	MARTIN 1992 REV TRUST, GEORGE
MAIN STREET	69	GRANT FAMILY REVOCABLE TRUST
MAIN STREET	93	MCKERLEY HEALTH CARE CENTERS
MAIN STREET	115	WHITNEY JR 82 REV TRST, ROBERT
MAIN STREET	119	HUNT, DAVID B.
MAIN STREET	125	JJEW REAL ESTATE
MAIN STREET	145	HALL FAMILY TRUST
MAIN STREET	147	AFFORDABLE HOUSING EDUCATION
MAIN STREET	149	LAFAYETTE REGIONAL SCHOOL
MAIN STREET	151	HARWOOD, GARY E.
MAIN STREET	153	STRIMBECK, LEE A
MAIN STREET	155	WOLCOTT, CHARLES J.

This screen show the route selected “TOWN CENTER” and the Street selected “MAIN STREET” and the accounts on Main Street added to your route. From here, you can select a record and move it up or down in the listing to place it in the appropriate location, or Remove the record from the list by selecting the account and clicking the appropriate button. Once you have sequenced the accounts to your liking, you can add more streets to the beginning, the end or anywhere in between. First select the account in the route where you want to insert another street and then from the Available Streets drop down list select a new street and click the Add to Route button. You will then be asked if you wish to insert the street prior to the selected account or append to the end of the route.



Via this procedure you will be able to create any possible route configuration and once completed, click the Save Route button to save your work or the “Close” button to cancel your changes and close the window.

If you want to reorder multiple sequential accounts at one time, highlight the first record to be moved, then hold down the Shift key on your keyboard and click on the record selector button to the left of the final record in the group to be moved. All the records will be highlighted and will move as a group up or down as you click the appropriate buttons or be removed from the route by clicking on the Remove button.

In addition to using the buttons, you can reposition accounts by dragging and dropping them within the list using the standard windows drag and drop actions with your mouse.

Editing a Single Account’s Route Assignment or Order

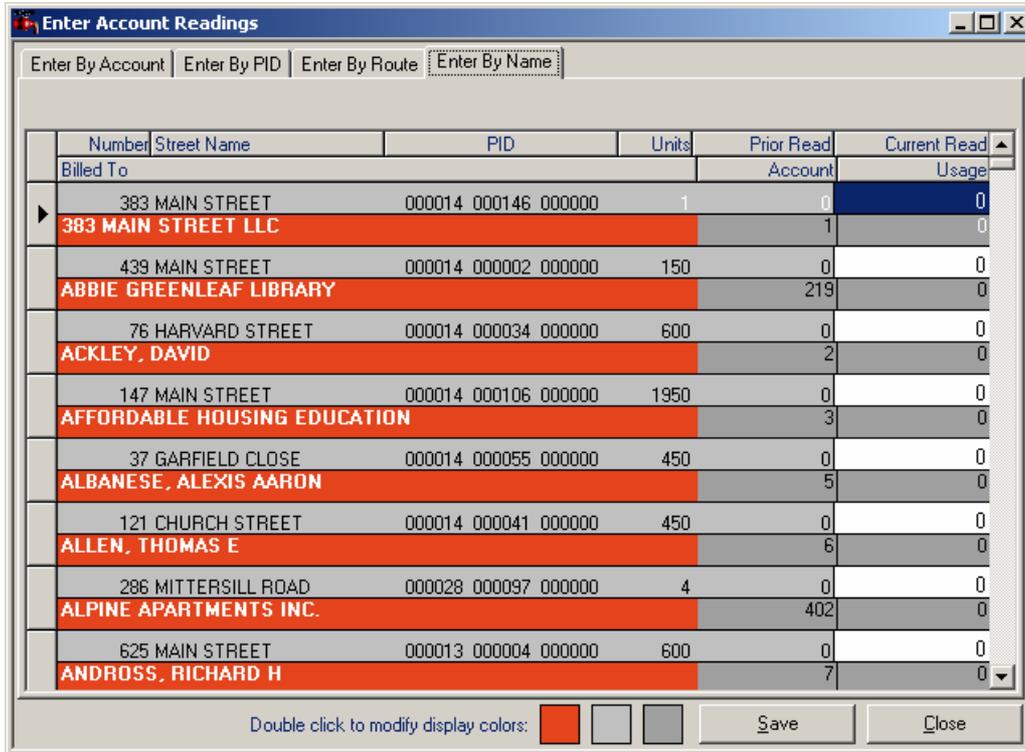
By selecting Utilities | Edit Routes, you are able to edit any account on any route. However, if you simply reposition a single record within an existing route or add a new account to an existing route, you can use the Route button on the main window toolbar. To do so, first use the Access Tabs to find and display the desired account, then click the Route button on the toolbar. If the account has already been assigned to a route, you will see the route displayed. If the account is not assigned to a route, you can choose a route from the available list and then click the Add to Route button. Once displayed in the displayed route list, you can then reposition it as needed.

Entering Meter Readings

If you do not use automated meter readers, you will need to enter the meter readings manually. To provide the meter reader with a list of accounts to read, you can prepare a readings report from the List by Route selection on the Reports menu. This report prints selected account information and previous meter readings along with a space to write in the new meter reading information.

Once you are ready to manually enter the meter readings, select Utilities | Enter Readings. You will see the Enter Account Readings dialog box displayed below. The accounts can be sorted in several different ways depending upon the order you wish to enter the readings. To sort the accounts, select one of the tabs across the top of the dialog: Enter by Account, Enter by PID, Enter by Route, or Enter by Name. If you choose Enter by Route, you will need to take the additional step of selecting the desired Route from the drop down list of available routes.

Regardless of the order in which the accounts are sorted, the readings entry grid will look largely the same. Each account is displayed on two lines of the grid, showing parcel location, PID, Units, Account Number, Billed Owner, and Prior Read amount. The only information you can edit here is the Current Read value, in the white box on the right end of each record. Once you enter a Current Read value for an account, simply press the Enter key. The system will calculate the usage as it moves to the next account. Press the “Save” button periodically throughout your data entry, as none of your changes are saved to the database until you press “Save”.



You can modify the display colors of the data entry grid by double clicking on the corresponding colored squares to the left of the “Save” button. The left-most square (defaults to red) highlights the column on which your accounts are sorted, as determined by your tab selection (i.e. Enter by Account, Enter by PID, etc.). You can select a new color for each of the three display colors, depending on your screen display and personal preferences.

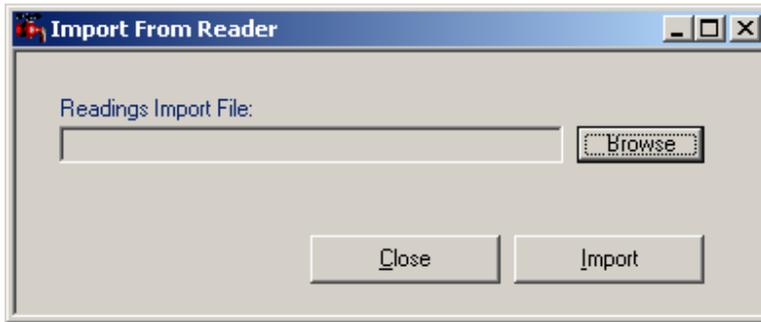
Exporting Accounts to Automated Readers

If you use automated readers to capture meter readings, you can export a list of account information to the readers prior to collecting the readings. To export the account information, select Utilities | Export for Reader. From within the Export Route dialog box, select the desired route to be exported from the list of defined routes. To proceed with the export, press the “Export” button. You will be prompted to identify the location to which the export file should be saved. Once the file is exported you can load the data into your reader.

Note: Make sure you have worked with Avitar to configure the export/import settings for your particular type of automated reader. There are multiple types of readers, each with their own specific requirements for data transfers.

Importing Readings from Automated Readers

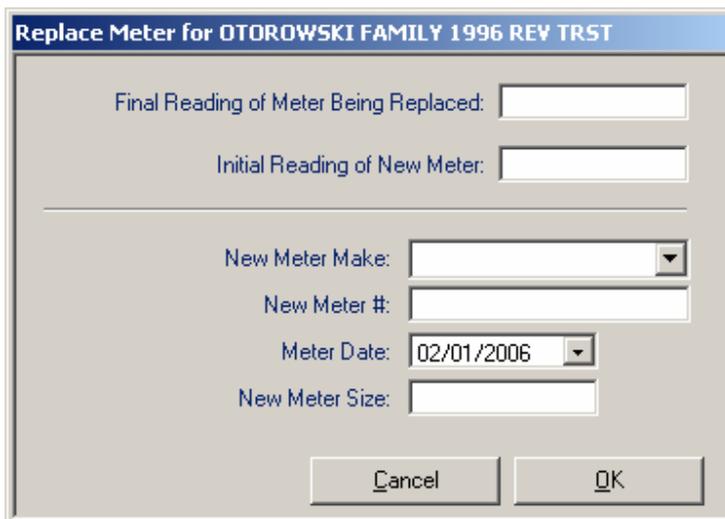
Once you have collected meter readings using an automated meter reader, you will need to import the data back from the reader to the database. To do so, select Utilities | Import from Reader. Use the “Browse” button to identify the file to be imported and then press the “Import” button to proceed with the import.



Note: Make sure you have worked with Avitar to configure the export/import settings for your particular type of automated reader. There are multiple types of readers, each with their own specific requirements for data transfers.

Replacing an Account's Meter

When a meter is replaced in the field, you need to indicate to the system that the old meter has been swapped out in order to maintain the correct reading information. When a meter is replaced, select the account using the Access Tabs and the Record Trees on the main window. With the account displayed, press the “Meter” button on the toolbar to view the Replace Meter dialog box as shown below.



To replace the meter, enter the final reading of the old meter and the initial

reading of the new meter, as well as any new meter information, such as meter number or make. The system will adjust the prior reading stored in the database to account for the new meter, such that your next meter reading will reflect the total amount used by the two meters.

Calculating Taxes

To calculate taxes, first make sure all of your accounts have been update, including owner information, meter readings, billing rules, and fees. Next select the Utilities | Calculate Bills menu item. If the last warrant calculated has been exported, you will be prompted whether you wish to begin a new warrant cycle. If so, answer “Yes” to proceed to the Tax Billing dialog box, in which you can set a due date. Check the Include Only Seasonal Bills if the warrant you wish to calculate is a seasonal warrant only.

To actually calculate bills, press the “Calculate” button. You will need to confirm the due date, and you will be asked to confirm the fiscal year and warrant number for the next warrant. If the fiscal year and warrant number are not correct, contact Avitar regarding resetting the proper fiscal year and warrant number. If they are correct you can proceed.

If you have any accounts that cannot be calculated, you will be notified in addition to receiving a list of the affected accounts. The most common reason preventing the calculation, is missing or incorrect meter readings. Consult the report and make any changes to the accounts necessary prior to recalculating the taxes. You can continue to calculate and commit a particular warrant as many times as you wish, until such time as you finalize the warrant. It is important to note that you will need to recalculate taxes in order to make any changes effective for the given warrant. So, if for example, you calculate the warrant and print a commitment report and then realize that you don't have the most recent address information for a given account, you should first update the account and then you must recalculate the tax warrant, in order for those changes to appear on the tax bill. Once you have successfully calculated taxes, you can proceed to creating the Commitment Report.

Creating the Commitment Report

The Commitment Report shows a summary of a particular tax warrant, as well as a detail of each account's bill amounts. You must calculate taxes prior to printing the Commitment Report. To view the Commitment Report, select Utilities | Commitment Report. You will see a summary of the most recently calculated warrant. Verify that this information is correct, and then press Print Commitment Report to print the report. If the information contained on the Commitment Report is correct, you can finalize the tax warrant. If the information is not correct, you can make any changes to accounts and then calculate the tax warrant

again.

Finalizing the Tax Warrant

Once you have calculated a warrant and printed the Commitment Report, you must finalize the warrant. A warrant cannot be recalculated once it has been finalized, and billing information can not be exported until the warrant has been finalized.

To finalize the warrant, select Utilities | Finalize Warrant menu item. Verify that the warrant and totals are correct and read the messages to make sure you are aware of what the process is doing. By finalizing the warrant, you will be resetting meter readings in preparation for the next set of readings, in addition to removing any temporary fees, as well as making the data available to the tax collector. (Note: meter readings will not be reset when exporting Seasonal Warrants).

To proceed with the finalizing of the warrant process, you will be asked to confirm the interest rates assigned to the tax bills. If the rates are not correct, you will need to cancel and reset the interest rates within the Town Information dialog box. Upon okaying the interest rates, you will be asked whether the warrant is the final warrant of the current fiscal year. If you answer “Yes”, the system will reset your fiscal year and warrant ID, such that you will no longer be able to calculate warrants for the current fiscal year.

In addition to finalizing the warrant within the Utility Billing database, it caches account information in a common file for use by the Avitar Tax Collect system. On some systems, the Utility Billing applications may be able to locate the file automatically. In other situations, you may be prompted to manually locate the watdat.mdb file. If you cannot locate this file, contact Avitar for assistance. Once the warrant has been finalized successfully, you can notify your tax collector that the warrant can be imported into the Avitar Tax Collect system. (Note: In some towns where the Utility Billing and Tax Collect systems are not on a common network, this may require an intermediate step of manually copying the watdat.mdb file to a disk).

Printing Tax Bills

Some towns will print Water/Sewer Tax Bills from the Avitar Tax Collect system after they have been imported. Others may wish to print the Water/Sewer Tax Bills from the Utility Billing system itself. Note that in either case, whether printing from Tax Collect or Utility Billing, the only bill format that can be printed is the 8 1/2" x 11" laser format. The dot matrix format is no longer supported.

To print bills from the Utility Billing system, first make sure you have calculated, committed, and finalized the warrant and then select Utilities | Tax Bills menu item. In the Tax Bill Setup dialog box, you can enter any messages to be printed on the bills, as well as return address, office hours and billing period information. Once the input is correct, press "Print" to actually print the bills.

Tax Bill Setup -- 2005 11th Warrant

Include On Bill:

Water Only Water And Sewer Sewer Only

Message 1:

Message 2:

Return Address

Billing Period

From: To:

of Warrants: of

Print Date:

Tax Collector & Office Hours

Phone:

Sort By: Billed Name Zip Code

Show Late Penalty: Amount:

NOTE: Bills will be printed with a 12% APR.

Display Bill History

The system allows you to review an account's billing information for any prior warrants. There are two ways to display Bill History.

First, you can select Utilities | Display Bill History. Within the Billing History dialog box you can search for bills either by PID or by Owner Name. In either case, enter the search criteria and then press the corresponding "Find" button.

The alternate method for displaying Bill History is to first display a selected account on the main window. Then using the Access Tabs and Record Trees with the record displayed, press the "History" button on the toolbar. With this method, you do not need to enter the search criteria - it defaults to searching for bills with the same PID. If however, you wish to search on the owner name of the selected account rather than PID, just select the History for Owner.... radio button once the dialog is displayed.

Whether you display Bill History from the drop down menu or from the toolbar button, the dialog box functions the same once you have past warrants displayed. The grid across the top of the dialog box shows all of the warrants in the database, sorted with the most recent warrants at the top. The grid shows the Warrant, PID, Owner Name, Bill Date, and Bill Amounts. To see more information on any warrant, simply select the warrant within the grid to view the warrant details listed below. Similarly, to view the Fees associated with any warrant, press the "Fees" button. To get back to a warrant's details, press the "Details" button.

Adding and Deleting Users

To add additional users to the system, select Utilities | Add User. Enter a username, type a password, and then confirm the password. Select a user access level for the new user from the choices listed. Note that each access level includes all of the privileges granted to lower access levels and each level is described within the Add User dialog box.

The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Add User". It has three text input fields: "New User Name:", "Password:", and "Confirm Password:". Below these is a section labeled "Access Type (Levels include all functions of lower levels):" with three radio button options: "Level 1 -- Print Reports" (which is selected), "Level 2 -- Edit Accounts, Import/Export, Taxes", and "Level 3 -- Edit Billing Rules, Edit Town Settings". At the bottom of the dialog are two buttons: "Cancel" and "Add User".

Get Assessing Owners

If your system is configured to import PID, name, address, and parcel location information from the Avitar Assessing application, you can obtain an updated record set of this information by selecting Utilities | Get Assessing Owners. In addition to getting a fresh list of PID's and owners to be used when adding new accounts, this function will update name and address information for existing accounts in the Utility Billing system that can be matched to the assessing database on PID. Any accounts which you have unchecked the Update Owner Information from Assessing box in the Edit Account dialog box; will not be updated during this process.

Town Information and System Settings

To modify the town information, such as address and tax collector, as well as to modify your system's configuration settings, select Utilities | Town Information. Within the Town Information dialog box there are two tabs: "Town Information" and "Rates, Billing, & Taxes". The first tab is for items such as return address and tax collector name and is self explanatory. Items on the second tab are highlighted below:

Interest Rate: These are the interest rates for water and sewer bills that will print on the bill and be exported to Tax Collect as part of the warrant.

Billing Cycle: This is used to preset the Fiscal Year and warrant number. Once

they have been preset, the system, based on your input, will take care of incrementing the warrants and fiscal years, so you should not need to reset these items except in the case of an error.

Multiplier for Importing Readings: When importing meter readings from automated readers, some readers require that the input be multiplied to obtain the actual reading. For example: the reader might output "1" when the reading is "1000". In such a case, the value here would obviously be "1000".

Database Backup Directory: This identifies a shared directory on your file server to which your application should look when performing a remote backup as detailed in the section on "Backing up Your Data". This will initially be set by Avitar during the install and conversion and should not need to be changed unless settings on your network change. Call Avitar for assistance if you think these needs to be changed, as it will need to be reflected on the file server as well.

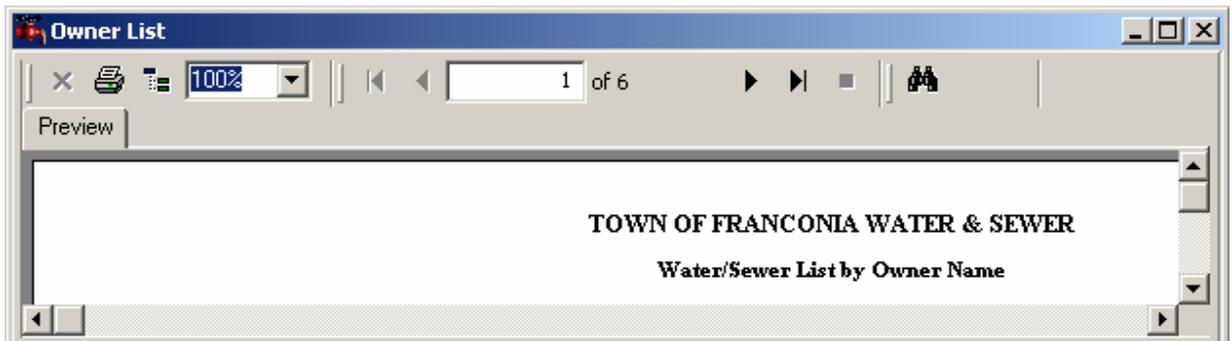
Limit Account # To Eight Characters: The Utility Billing database will allow account numbers of up to 20 characters in length. However, the import formats for several of the automated readers will only accept an eight character account number. In these instances, this setting can be checked to keep you from inadvertently entering an account number that would not be compatible.

Automatically Generate Account # For New Accounts: The system requires that account numbers be unique for each account. For Towns in which the account number does not correlate to any other values, you can choose to have the system automatically generate a new, unique account number for each new account.

I Am On The Same Network As Assessing: This is to indicate to the system that you share a common computer network with the Avitar Assessing system and is used in the importing of owner, address, and parcel location information. If you do share a common network with Assessing, you also need to indicate the Assessing Datasource and Catalog to which Utility Billing should connect. These values will be set by Avitar on installation. Call Avitar if you think these values need to be modified.

Reports Menu

There are a number of reports available from the Reports menu that are all relatively straightforward. The one thing worth noting is the report preview window, common to all system reports. The report preview control bar is pictured below:



None of the reports are automatically sent to the printer. To actually print the report, press the Printer icon found on the control bar. If you wish to scroll through the pages of the report within the preview mode, use the left and right arrows. The arrow icons with the additional black lines will move you straight to the first or last page of the report. If you wish to zoom in or out of the report, you can select a different resolution from the percentage drop down list. If you are searching for a particular name within a report, you can also type the name in the search text box and then press the binocular icon to search for the next instance of the search text, in the report. If the search does not return the instance for which you were looking, press the binocular icon again to search for the next instance. Once you are done with any of the report previews, press the close icon - the black "X" located in the upper right corner - to close the report window.

