



By **Kate Hamilton**  
 Managing Editor  
 khamilton@hanleywood.com

## All-in-One Solution

**W**ith budgets tight in the current economy, no company can afford to waste time and resources on redundant work. That's why Noel Ferrell, owner of Ferrell Concrete LLC, Hainesport, N.J., looked for a comprehensive construction-focused software solution that could manage her company's finances.

After looking at the bottom line, Ferrell realized the company's use of QuickBooks was costing time and money, while lacking the much-needed details that could help them work more efficiently.

reported too late to do anything. We were underbidding or overbidding and had no real-time, accurate data to help us figure out why or how to fix it."

Seeking a comprehensive solution, Ferrell turned to Maxwell Systems, King of Prussia, Pa. Its ProContractorMX software application allows Ferrell Concrete to manage takeoffs and estimating with job cost accounting and project management.

Before switching over, Ferrell Concrete ran into a number of errors and inaccuracies using a basic accounting program. Because the combination of software tools didn't allow the staff to catch errors, materials for a job were bid too low, even though the correct supply was ordered, resulting in loss of profit.

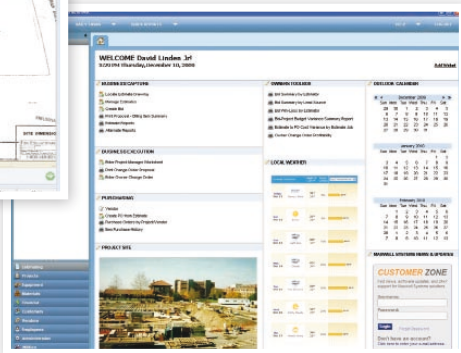
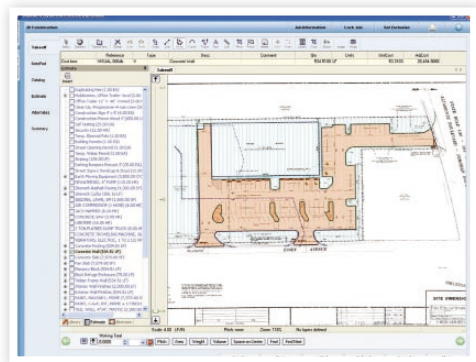
as Davis-Bacon Wage Determinations and workers' compensation. "Every week the program incorrectly calculated the residence wage tax for one of our employees. It was never accurate and created so much extra work. It took us hours to do certified payroll for just 25 to 30 guys," says Ferrell. The new software suite reduces redundant data entry and improves accuracy by retaining the correct information for employees.

Before upgrading, Ferrell Concrete had to create manual reports, often going without key data. The new software solution eliminates this tedious task by providing powerful reports with real-time information. Ferrell believes this alone has improved their ability to make educated business decisions.

With a better understanding of finances, Ferrell Concrete has been able to identify new profit areas and ways to diversify, without needing additional software components. Equipment usage costs now are tracked, allowing the contractor to bill them directly to a project. When Ferrell opened an equipment rental company, the venture's management quickly integrated into the existing system.

Even though investing in administrative costs during a struggling economic climate, Ferrell found it to be a sound business investment. "We've had to downsize our staff and diligently watch our budgets," she says. "I can't even imagine how much time we save with an all-in-one solution." **CC**

*For more information about this and other software packages catering to the construction industry, turn to page 70.*



**The software interface allows users to quickly switch between tasks, depending on the project's needs, and access data online.**

PHOTOS: MAXWELL SYSTEMS

"We were making costly mistakes," says Ferrell. "Using QuickBooks, we had no control of job costing, lacked detailed reporting capabilities, and couldn't track our wins or losses, labor, materials, change orders, or any other important business data. To keep at pace with the activity in the field and managing a busy office, we often overlooked issues or the problems were

Similarly, unidentified change orders caused the company to lose money on projects. Using the new software, project managers now can monitor project budgets, costs, billing, and accounting data simultaneously.

Handling payroll also was a daunting and time-consuming task due to the complex payroll scenarios common to the construction industry, such