

# Delaware River Stevedores



Delaware River Stevedores (DRS) recently opened a new operation office at the Port of Wilmington's Robert Senseny Administration building. In the photo are DRS staff at the Wilmington dock (left to right): Gary Lewis, Operations; Vice President Roger Youngren; President Robert Palaima; Director of Business Development Dennis Latina; and DRS Wilmington Port Manager Cliff Lasch.

Delaware River Stevedores, Inc. (DRS), a regional stevedoring and cargo handling company jointly owned by Stevedoring Services of America (SSA) and P&O Ports North America Inc., opened its Delaware office at the Port of Wilmington's Robert Senseny Administration building last fall.

DRS has been providing stevedoring services along the Delaware River for the past 15 years and is the region's largest employer of I.L.A. labor. The company has grown three-fold in the past 10 years and now operates at six facilities, handling an average of 500 vessels per year spanning the gamut of bulk, breakbulk, containerized and roll on/roll off cargoes.

DRS's entry into Wilmington came initially through the development of a relationship with Port Contractors International (PCI), a leading bulk cargo logistics company operating at the Port of Wilmington. DRS is the stevedoring arm for PCI's activities on the Wilmington terminal. Dennis Latina, DRS Director of Business Development, has been a key figure in developing DRS's relationship and business activities at the Port of Wilmington.

DRS President Robert Palaima noted that DRS operates on the Delaware River but its parent organizations, SSA and P&O, are active around the world.

"This strong network enjoys market

intelligence and new commercial relationships which Wilmington is now part of," he added.

For example, DRS expanded its Wilmington horizons by landing new work, C & S Shipping, an important palletized frozen meat service from Australia, in 2000. Latina traveled to Brisbane to personally attend the loading of the first vessel and to build the partnership between DRS, C & S, the Australian exporters, the Diamond State Port Corporation, and two major refrigerated carriers, Seatrade and East Wind, which serve this trade. "We stepped out of the traditional end of ship's tackle stevedoring mode and became part of the entire transporta-

# at Wilmington

tion chain in order to aggressively pursue this opportunity for Wilmington,” Palaima said. Palaima believes that DRS’s regional set up will bring the Port of Wilmington to a closer relationship and cooperation with the neighboring ports on the Delaware River.

One river links Camden, Philadelphia and Wilmington. The port community faces a number of common challenges

such as the recent USDA embargo on Spanish clementines which caused concern to all shippers of perishable cargoes; the prospect of punitive tariffs on imported steel; the promise of a deeper (45ft) shipping channel which will open up new opportunities throughout the tri-state region; and heightened port security concerns post September 11. “Good cooperation between all of the Ports is valuable to the Ports’ success,” Palaima added.

Cliff Lasch, DRS Port Manager, who is assisted by Gary Lewis and Ben Petty, two of the company’s top operations staff, heads DRS Delaware’s office. Port Illustrated welcomes DRS to the Port of Wilmington and is looking forward to seeing the company grow and prosper with the Port.

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