

Executive DIRECTOR'S Letter



This year has proven to be a "fruitful" one, so to speak. In fact, a bounty of fruit, including Chilean grapes, peaches and plums, New Zealand apples and pears, Central American bananas and tropical pineapples, discharged at the Port of Wilmington kept the Port very busy this past season.

Fruit continues to be an extraordinarily important cargo at our Port. Inside this issue of *Port Illustrated* you will read about the varieties of fruit handled at the Port, about Chilean fruit cargo, and about the fruit fumigation process – an integral step in getting this valuable cargo to market quickly, safely and damage-free. You will also read about how the Port became a certified member of the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT).

Our customers have recognized the Port's labor and management team, its state-of-the-art dockside cold storage facilities and sophisticated electronic inventory and security systems as one of the best operations in the nation, and they continue to choose Wilmington as their port of call on the U. S. Eastern seaboard. Our fruit-handling capabilities have pushed our port to the forefront of the fruit trade industry making it one of the world's largest in terms of annual volume of imports. Today, it is unquestionable the largest fruit distribution hub in the U. S.!

In this issue, you will also read about three maiden voyages to the Port, and about our Cold Chain Distribution Services, which has effectively served meat import customers, such as C&S Shipping of Australia which recently chose the Port as its Mid-Atlantic distribution hub for frozen beef from Northeastern Australia and Kyokuyo Shipping which carries cargo originating in New Zealand to Wilmington.

We are dedicated to serving the reefer cargo trade by constantly reassessing our customers' needs at the Port and working to deliver additional value in order to meet those needs. A warm "thank you" to our customers and our Port team for a successful 2003-2004 fruit season.

Gene Bailey
Executive Director

Port Illustrated

Spring 2004 • Vol. 14, No. 2

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