

# DSPC Upgrades ACCOUNTING System



(L-R) Susan Shoemaker, Staff Accountant; Victor Farkas, Controller; Antonia Brizolaki, Accounting Supervisor; and Seth Morecraft, System Analyst

Diamond State Port Corporation (DSPC) completed upgrades to its accounting system earlier this year. The new, more reliable Oracle system offers expanded capabilities, software compatibility, and technical support from the software developer. Although it will be transparent to DSPC's employees, customers and vendors, the transition to the new accounting system is part of DSPC's continuous efforts to improve efficiency.

Late last year, DSPC's Finance & Administration and Technology Solutions departments teamed up to implement the Oracle Financials accounting package. It replaces an older, outdated accounting system.

"The new system will reduce the reliance on technical support often required with the old system to generate financial statements during

many month-end cycles," said DSPC Director of Finance & Administration Parul Shukla. "Staff and customers of the accounting department will benefit from the improved efficiency gained from the new system," he said.

By January, the general ledger, accounts receivable and accounts payable modules had been successfully installed. Payroll, check printing and lift truck allocation functions followed two months later. The critical work of importing figures into these modules immediately followed installation. By the start of the 2004 fiscal year on July 1, staff implemented a fixed asset module that interfaces directly with the Port's ledger.

Staff training was conducted and accounting hierarchy was set and reset prior to implementation.

To test and verify the proficiency of the upgrade, accounting staff diligently ran both systems in parallel during February while external auditors reviewed processes and balances for consistency and accuracy.

The upgrade was completed and rolled out March 1. "This was a major undertaking that our controller, Victor Farkas, and other colleagues on the team managed to complete a full month ahead of schedule," said Shukla.

The results are key improvements that include cross validation rules, posting controls, large entry imports made possible by compatibility with Microsoft Excel, drill-down capabilities, and greater report processing speed. The system will be expanded in the future to include automatic check reconciliation and an executive information system (EIS) reporting module.

"Technology Solutions personnel – in particular, Systems Analyst Seth Morecraft – have done a remarkable job with minimal use of external consultants throughout the implementation process," said DSPC Director of Technology Solutions Inigo Thomas. Typically, an installation of this magnitude might cost upwards of a hundred thousand dollars, said Thomas, and implementation by in-house staff is unheard of in the industry, he explained. DSPC software programmers developed customizations and eliminated the purchase of expensive, third-party add-ons, saving additional dollars.