OAKLAND | **Agri-Business Accounting Solutions**

CONNECT

CONNECTING YOUR BUSINESS TOGETHER • SPRING 2004

Executive TECHNOLOGY Conference 2004

*By **Chuck Carlson** • VP & COO • ccarlson@oaklandcorp.com*

All of us at Oakland say "Thank You!" to everyone who attended our Executive Technology Conferences in January and February of 2004. Forty-eight companies from 4 states were in attendance for these meetings, which represented approximately half of Oakland's client base. Needless to say, we were Extremely Impressed with everyone's participation, responses, and commitment.

Oakland Corporation has dedicated itself to **Excellence, Integrity, and Service** for the past 20 years. Oakland will never change these commitments as the core mission of the company. However, this doesn't mean we can't change to Continuously Improve our **Products and Services** to provide you even better assistance with your business needs.

This is why we held these Executive Technology Conferences, to inform you, our Clients, on where and how Oakland is Headed in the Future. We Are Inviting You To Come Along!

If you are currently an Oakland Client, you already have an idea of the majority of what the Future Holds. **The future: It's in Your DATA**.

But, which of these questions would you answer Yes to?
Would you like…

- **a CHOICE of a Windows® look and feel when running Oakland applications?**

- **to have One Screen (an Executive Summary) that tells you how your business is doing Right Now?**
The industry calls it a "Dashboard" to display critical Management Data with drill downs to the details, available on "One" screen. A manager shouldn't have to look through various parts of an Accounting and/or Grain system to find the information needed to manage a company. Why not view it from "One" screen, the Executive Summary.
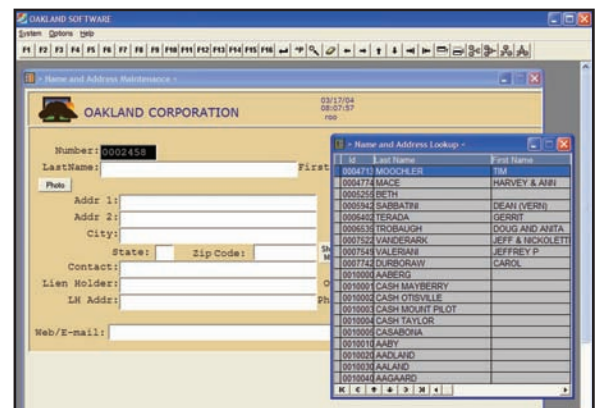
Agronomy & Mapping

*By **Larry Young** • Fertilizer & Grain Specialist*
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In response to the many requests we have received on map printing, Oakland began researching options available to our clients. One of the features we are looking to incorporate into the Fertilizer Module when a client's system is updated to version 8.5.1 is the ability to print a geographic map, for a specific farm, when printing the blend sheet.

Currently we are talking with the SST Software Company out of Stillwater, Oklahoma, a company who is willing to see how they can integrate their system to Oakland's. We are excited about the possibilities and are hopeful that in the coming months progress will begin on ways that SST and Oakland Corporation can work together. We will continue to update you on our advances. Thank you and have a safe spring.

Website Update

*By **Amy Mogren** • Office Coordinator*
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Several months ago the process of rebuilding our website began. Paul and Dan Oakland have been working on the rebuilding project and have discovered it is a HUGE undertaking. For that reason we will be updating the Products page first and moving on from there. Our goal is to have the "New" site up and fully functional by the first of June. Please contact me with any ideas or suggestions that would enhance the value of our website, 800-383-5114 ext. 100 or via email.

While on the subject of websites, I would like to take the time to throw out this reminder. Please make sure that as you direct your clients to view their on-line Account Information, you are sending them to the correct site. Please refer them to **www.FarmerData.com**. We have received many calls and emails to clarify which site to visit for Account Information. 99% of the time it is a "book-marking" issue. This means that long ago these individuals saved this site under their Favorites or otherwise, or "Book-Marked" the web page for future reference. We have since changed certain sister sites and this was one of them. **www.oaklandcorporation.com** used to take you to FarmerData, now it links you to our company Home Page. When your clients attempt to log in with their account number and password on our home page site, they are unable gain access.

If your statements remind your clients to "View their on-line account information @ **www.oaklandcorporation.com**", give us a call and we will change the message to say **www.FarmerData.com** for you.

Executive TECHNOLOGY

- **View a Graph at a click of your mouse, to compare this year with last year, or this year to budget?** (See Example Below)
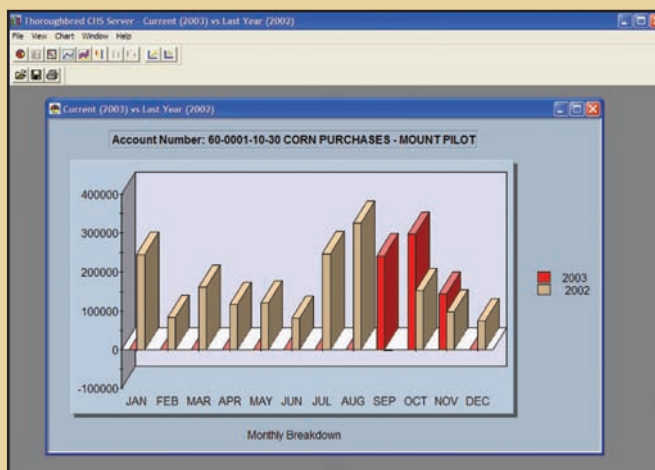
- **Automatically Transfer YOUR Data from the server to YOUR Microsoft® Excel spreadsheet as an option right off the Oakland menu?**

- **FREE Software?** Oakland is offering "Packaged Pricing" by removing the License Fees on several Oakland Software Modules. There is No Longer a License Fee on FarmerData.com. PLUS Annual Maintenance has been reduced by 40%.

- **FarmerData.com** allows your customers access to THEIR Accounting and Grain information via the Internet.

- **Ability to attach Maps** (See Larry's article concerning SST integration), email addresses, web pages, documents (to eliminate filing a hard copy) and about anything else you can think of to an Oakland application.

Oakland is taking advantage of the latest technology to give you simplified access to your data to allow you to...
Manage Your Business More Efficiently.

Conference 2004 (CONTINUED)

We Asked For A Dozen & We Got 2 Dozen!
Initially, at these conferences, we were asking for approximately a dozen clients to commit to this New Environment by March 31st, 2004, to gradually move more clients over a period of time. Well, we asked for a dozen companies, and we got two dozen companies who have committed to this New Environment.

Why Would So Many Companies Commit?
This initial group of companies would form the Oakland Development Advisor Group for 2004. This group will advise Oakland on what is important to develop and, just as vital, what is NOT important to develop under this New Environment. *"Packaged Pricing" for Oakland Software will be available once there is a commitment.*

Can We Still Participate?
Yes… You may contact Arlen Oakland at 800-383-5114 ext. 104#. Arlen can explain to you more of the benefits of moving to this New Environment. In addition, there will be another round of these Conferences scheduled on July 21st and July 28th, 2004. But please remember, **you don't have to attend a Conference to participate.**

What If I'm Not Currently On An Oakland System?
Conversion Of Information: Oakland can convert your information, including History*, from your current system directly to Oakland's New Environment. *(*Conversion of this information depends solely upon accessibility to your data and defined field definitions from your current software vendor.)*

Training: Oakland will train your staff at your office or ours.

Software: You can either buy or lease (Leasing is a New option available as of 2004, under our New "Packaged Pricing" options).

Hosting: Also NEW for 2004. Why purchase the Software and a Server when you can connect to Oakland via the Internet with a VPN connection. If you have high-speed Internet availability, you have the option to have Oakland host your system, which can save you a substantial amount in up-front costs.

As you can see, Oakland provides choices on how YOU would like to manage your back office solutions. If you would like more information concerning an Oakland solution for your business, please contact me, Chuck Carlson, at 1-800-383-5114 ext. 110# or via email.

SUMMARY

Oakland Is…
- Moving Toward The Future
- Connecting You To Your Data
- Providing "Packaged Software"
- Providing More Options For Your Business

So, Would You Like To Come With Us?

Excellence, Integrity, and Service
*By **John Lounsberry** • Client Services Manager*
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New Version Release
The latest version of our software (4.15) is now in release. By the time most of you receive this newsletter, it will already be installed on your system. It has been a very productive few months for the Oakland development and support staff implementing and testing the new enhancements. There are a large number of enhancements to the accounting system, please take some time to review the Release Notes located at the bottom of the main accounting menu. If you have not received the version update yet, you can review the Release Notes on our website, oaklandcorp.com, and click on the support tab. If you have any questions at all about the enhancements, do not hesitate to contact us.

Once again, thank you to all of our clients. These enhancements are a direct result of our clients communicating their needs to us. We value this ongoing process greatly.

E-Mail Support
A growing number of our clients are contacting us with questions and requests via email. If you would prefer to contact us with any of your support questions via email, please do. To get started, go to the oaklandcorp.com website and click on Company and Contact Information. Pick the appropriate "Mail To" department, a return address, message, and click send. One of our support staff will be in contact as soon as possible.

To ensure that your email is received and responded to quickly, please use the general email addresses for each department (accounting, grain, hardware, sales, etc.). This helps to route your email quickly to all available staff members in that department.

New Season, New Challenges, Same Commitment
The spring season is rapidly approaching for our clients. As always, this brings new challenges and needs from your customers. While the information demands and challenges seem to change almost daily, Oakland's commitment to our clients remains the same. We **will** be the best Client Services Department of **any** vendor, in **any** business you deal with.

Here is wishing you a safe and profitable season!

Protection & Solutions

*By **Dave Licht** • IT Department • dlicht@oaklandcorp.com*

The importance of keeping good backups of your files from your personal PC cannot be overemphasized. Hard drives can fail without warning, destroying your irreplaceable work. It is sometimes possible to recover data from failed hard drives, but it is an expensive process, with professional data recovery firms charging thousands of dollars per drive with little guarantee of success. There are many different ways to do backups (Network Share, Flash disk, Zip, Tape Drive, CD-RW, DVD-RW). The method you use is not as important as having a regular back-up strategy. How frequently you back up depends on how often you update your files. If it's a file you work on every day, then a daily backup is a good idea. Something you work on less often may only require a weekly backup. You need to make the decision about how important your data is, and how much work you are prepared to redo should your hard drive fail.

Users should not back up system and application files. Many current PC applications are very large and backing them up would overwhelm the available backup storage. In the event of a major workstation system failure, applications can be restored from disk or CD ROM. The data can then be restored from the backup device.

To make restoration/back up of data files easier, you should save your data files in a common folder on your PC. All data files (Word-processing documents, spreadsheet files, pictures, MP3's, etc.) should be saved into an area separate from the default application. To do this, the end user should check the **Save As**… location and change it to the common folder. Within this data directory different subdirectories or folders for each type of work file can be established.

With all data files held in one location, problems associated with backing them up using any of the backup utilities is greatly simplified. When using this method, the user avoids problems associated with having to separate work files from application files.

SAME BUT DIFFERENT

There are things that could harm your PC in addition to hardware failure. Spyware, Viruses, Worms, Hackers, plus many others are all preventable.

Spyware is any software that covertly gathers user information through the user's Internet connection without his or her knowledge. This software then sells your email address to others usually for advertising purposes.

Viruses & Worms are programs or pieces of code that are loaded and run without your knowledge and have the ability to replicate themselves.

Running a currently updated Virus scanning program like *Norton AntiVirus®* or *McAfee VirusScan®* is your best defense in prevention from these "Pests".

Hackers (aka: crackers) are individuals who gain unauthorized access to computer systems for the purpose of stealing and/or corrupting data. To stop individuals from breaking into your local pc you need a hardware or software firewall. A firewall blocks access to ports (specified by your IT Administrator) to and from the Internet.

*If these are issues you are dealing with currently or have dealt with in the past, we can help. Attend our "Managing your PC" classes on April 14 or April 21. Visit **www.oaklandcorp.com** to register.*