



## President's Letter

Spring is the time to start planting things you want to grow throughout the summer. At **USTI**, we have been planting a bunch of new ideas in the hope that they will grow to be successful software offerings. There are several I want to spend time to point out.

**asyst:Project Accounting** will be released in April and provides a seamless method to account for and manage projects and grants. It provides an overlay to the normal General Ledger accounting system and permits accounting for revenues and expenditures for an unlimited number of projects, tasks within projects, and cost categories. It interfaces to **asyst:GL**, **asyst:AP** and **asyst:PR**.

**asyst:Cash Control** is a much awaited cash management system that will permit all **asyst** users who handle cash receipting to have better control over bank deposits and bank reconciliation, and goes significantly further than the Bank Reconciliation capabilities in **asyst:AP** and **asyst:PR**. Look for it in late April or May.

**asyst:Municipal Court** will be released in the Third Quarter of 2004 (although you can get a sneak preview by coming to the UserForum in Dallas on May 5 to 7, 2004. **asyst:MC** provides added court capabilities to **asyst:Citations** including warrant processing, fees, fines, and costs, and all disposition handling.

Finally, even though it has already been released by the time you read this, as an early Spring bloomer, the **MAS Data Dictionaries** for Tax and Payroll have been released. We are glad to note that Descore has also released a new Java based interface to the SQL ODBC product that permits the data dictionaries to work significantly faster than the previous release. Now, any Windows product, including Word, Excel, and Access, will be able to access the data in the **MAS** data files.

As you can see, we have been (and will continue to be) very busy. Hope you will find what we are growing to be worth getting into your budgets.

## Spotlight: *Horizon City*

As one of the fastest growing cities in Texas, Horizon City's population has increased almost 50% in the last three years. With their limited number of employees, Horizon City needed a way to become more efficient yet stay within budget. John Dixon, Horizon City Public Works Director, tells me that that is what he feels they have accomplished with the implementation of **asyst:Building Permits, Business License** and **Code Enforcement**.

John says they have especially benefited from the implementation of their **asyst:Code Enforcement** module. Now they have a hub, the Code Enforcement, which everything else in the town can revolve around, thus greatly increasing efficiency. John says he likes the fact that because all of the modules tie together, you are only limited by the potential of what you can put in the database.

A year and a half into their implementation, John says he is seeing the benefits of a more smoothly and efficiently run city. Thank you for your support, John, and good luck to the growing city of Horizon City, TX!

## The Introduction of the Gold Support Service!

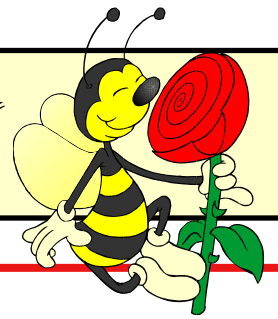
**USTI** is now pleased to offer a new premium level of service for customer support. The Gold Support Service guarantees a one hour response time for all support calls made during normal business hours.

Our standard business policy is a two hour response. During peak times this level of service can be more than two hours and less than two hours during normal times but the goal is to have an overall average of a two hour response time for all support calls.

We understand that our standard level of service may not be acceptable for all clients and therefore have decided to offer this new premium level of service.

If you would like to receive a quote on raising your existing support service to Gold please feel free to contact Mike DeFord at (800) 456-8784 or email Mike at [mike.deford@usti.us](mailto:mike.deford@usti.us).

# GENERAL INFORMATION



## Interested in Becoming a Reference?

In the last President's Letter, Tom Gibbs reiterated **USTI's** long term goal of improving our processes, procedures and products to you and your experience with **USTI** better.

Increasing customer satisfaction will be one of the results of **USTI** working towards this goal. We believe we are on the right track. Our sales team is doing their job of increasing our market share in the U.S. and Canada. We have made enhancements to our customer support software that allows us to track satisfaction as well as identification of new features, functionality, and help line text to incorporate in future product releases. We also know this is an ongoing continuous process to provide improvement. At **USTI**, we are committed to achieving this goal.

With this in mind, as you know, municipalities like yourself who are looking to make software changes often request references they can call and ask questions. If you are interested in becoming a reference for **USTI**, please give Rebecca Gibbs a call at (866) 493 -8784. If you are already a **USTI** reference, as always thank you for your support.

## *2004 Dallas UserForum*

Now in its 20th year, the Dallas UserForum continues to be a must-attend conference for your city! Come take advantage of our twenty years of experience in training and, of course, fun! This year's theme will be casino night. So, come help us celebrate our 20th Anniversary! The sessions will include tips and techniques on your existing software, enhancement updates and technology classes. You will leave the UserForum with valuable tips to better utilize your existing software and, in addition, learn how to use emerging technology to become more efficient in your office.

## **New Sales Representative!**

Please help me welcome our newest employee, Rebecca Gibbs. Rebecca will be selling additional applications to the **asyst** client base.

Now, here is a little about Rebecca. She graduated from the University of Alabama with a degree in accounting. She interned with Arthur Anderson as an auditor in Nashville, TN. Since her graduation, Rebecca has changed directions and found her real niche in sales. She has recently moved to New Orleans, LA where she and her fiancé are planning a wedding for October.

Welcome aboard Rebecca!

## Updates, Updates, Updates

Whether you love them or hate them, **USTI** does do updates. **USTI** takes pride in the fact that we are constantly improving our software and having those improvements made available to you right away, instead of waiting months or years for the big "Release." We also have a commitment, that when an error is found we fix it right away. A lot of software vendors when confronted with an error in the code wait until the next release before fixing the error.

There are three types of updates. Service packs which contain all previous updates as well as enhancements. Individual updates which contain a fix for a particular problem or enhancement. Hotfixes which contain all individual updates prior to the release of a service pack.

We are often asked, how can I tell what updates I have loaded? Service packs, when installed, roll the release number. If you have loaded Administrator Service pack 1, then when you first sign into the system, look at the very top of the screen. You will see "**asyst** for MS office [Administrator v 10.1]." The .1 tells you that service pack US\_V10SP1.exe has been loaded. This same line will appear for each application after you have selected one from the menu. Just look at the top and you can tell which service pack has been loaded for each individual application. To view which individual updates are loaded, click on Help from the menu bar at the top of the screen. Then, select About **asyst**, updates, a list will be displayed showing all the individual updates and the date they were loaded. If the entire list of individual updates show being applied on the same date, chances are you loaded a hotfix. A hotfix will load all individual updates listed since the last service pack and will use the same installation date for all updates on the list.

With V10 we came out with the hotfix to lessen the burden of downloading so many individual updates. For instance, if you are in an application that has one service pack, 10 individual updates and a hotfix, all you need to load is the service pack and the hotfix.

Do's and Don'ts of updates:

Do you have to load an update the minute it comes out? No, if you are not having any problems or don't specifically need the enhancement, then you can wait. However, once an update comes out that you want, you must load all previous updates. One of the biggest problems we encounter is customers that cherry pick the list of updates. You should always install all previous updates that came out before the one you want to load.

Everyone has Administrator; it is the hub to the whole wheel and should not be overlooked. Administrator updates should always be loaded first.

Some updates require that you loaded other updates prior to loading that particular one. Make sure you do that, as it will have an effect on the software. Those updates will have a red warning statement letting you know about them.



# Northern Exposure



## "To Be A Lexus"

Marion R. Eby;  
County of Brant

At the 2003 **USTI** Conference, the users of the **MAS** system in attendance discussed how to enhance the capabilities of the **MAS** products. There is a very positive attitude to the stability and functionality of this system but the difficulty in extracting information from the system for reporting purposes to meet the needs of the end users is a major deficiency.

Dominic do Forno, from the Municipality of Chatham-Kent has developed a data dictionary which provides a link from the tax and property system to their website that allowed the tax account information on the system to be available to the public. This allows realtors to find the information they need without using valuable staff time to provide this same data.

By demonstrating the viability of a data dictionary link, Dominic was able to interest **USTI** in the process and with the support of the users present; **USTI** was persuaded to commit to developing the data dictionary. **Tom Gibbs, President of USTI, indicated** that the program would be ready for the Tax and Payroll modules by the 1st quarter in 2004, with the balance of the modules being completed by the end of the year. Debbie Jones will act as the contact person from **USTI** for this process.

The potential of this linking mechanism is endless. Reports can be formatted in any compatible program, such as Excel, Word, Access, Crystal Reports, etc. The report, once setup, can then be run with current data being pulled from the **MAS** system through this linking process every time you run the report.

It was felt, by the members present, that there were many benefits from participating in developing the system to its full potential. **A user group with a committee structure was quickly formed (a committee membership list is available at [www.justimagine.com](http://www.justimagine.com)).** Four committee members were drafted to act as the initial contact group to coordinate the activities and to keep the members informed. The subcommittee members have special interests in the modules listed and will work with **USTI**, either individually or by gathering other interested users to assist them to work toward an end product that will be useful and user friendly.

In order to communicate with other members, Tom Gibbs very generously provided a **JUSTInternet** site [www.justimagine.com](http://www.justimagine.com), for the group to use. Dominic will act as webmaster to get it up and running. It is envisioned that this forum can be used to have Q and A's, post documentation developed by members, share customization products developed for specific needs and to generally assist users with solutions to prevent each person "having to re-invent the wheel themselves."

In the future, training of subordinate staff in group settings for specialized processes to allow sharing of problems and solutions is another by-product of an active user group. Working together to make the system better is a win-win situation for everyone.

## MAS Data Dictionary Ready for Immediate Release

**USTI** is pleased to announce that the **MAS Data Dictionaries** are currently available for the **MAS** Property Tax and Payroll Modules. The Data Dictionary will allow end users to easily access their **MAS** database with any ODBC compliant Report Writer tool. This ODBC Report Writer layer will enable end users to **easily** export data to Excel, publish data on websites or to create ad hoc reports. **USTI** has committed that a full ODBC data access layer will be delivered for the entire **MAS** suite by the end of 2004.

The current price is \$750 for each data dictionary plus \$150 maintenance. In addition each site will require an ODBC driver from BBX. The cost of the driver will vary depending on how many users. The price of a single user is \$324 and the cost of a 5 user license is \$1350. Please contact **USTI** to get specific pricing. The installation cost will be \$450 per data dictionary. Additionally, **USTI** will also be offering on-line or class room training for the new report writing tool. Training Classes will also be held this fall in London at the UserForum.

If you are interested in receiving a quote or placing an order, please contact Lisa Bush at (800) 456 8784 ext 1500 or Debbie Jones at (800) 456 8784 ext 2031.

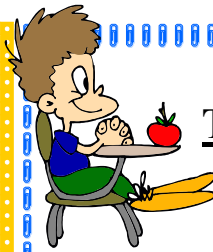
## Manitoba **USTI** User Group Meeting

Mark your calendars for the annual Manitoba **USTI** User Group Meeting. This year the meeting will be held in Portage La Prairie May 20<sup>th</sup> – May 21<sup>st</sup>. The conference will be held at the Canada Inn and reservations can be made at 1 (800) 817 - 7855. A block of rooms have been reserved with a discount and you can mention Group 100 and receive the negotiated room rate. Marion Grogan, CAO of the RM of Eriksdale will be coordinating the enrollment of the conference. Please contact Marion at (204) 739- 2666 if you have not received your registration packet. We are looking forward to a record attendance this year.

## asyst General Government Modules

The **asyst** General Government modules utilize a common database of people and locations to automate the tasks of Property Tax Billing, Code Enforcement, Business License, Building Permits and Animal License. The revenue collected from all of these modules is integrated with the **asyst** General Ledger Module. These modules can be implemented separately or all at once. If you are currently tracking these items manually or would like to have an integrated solution please give Rebecca Gibbs a call at (866) 493-8784 to learn more about these modules.

The website is [www.usti.us](http://www.usti.us). The next step is to access Support On-Line and start selecting the above options. If you need help the first time around feel free to call support for assistance.



## Training Schedule For 2004

May **No training due to the conference**

June **21st — 25th**

July **19th — 23rd**

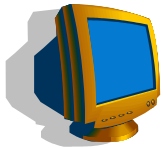
August **16th — 20th**

September **20th — 24th**

October **18th — 22nd**

November **15th — 19th**

These training sessions are for **asyst** and are held in Dallas, TX.



## **USTI Canada UserForum**



The 2004 **USTI** Canada UserForum will be held Sunday, October 17th through Tuesday, October 19th at the Best Western Lamplighter Inn in London, ON. As usual, the UserForum will be informative and tons of fun! We hope to see all of you there!

### **2004 USTI Office Closures**

The United States Office Will be Closed the Following Days:

January 1st **New Years Day**

April 9th **Good Friday**

May 31st **Memorial Day**

July 5th **In observance of Independence Day**

September 6th **Labor Day**

November 25th **Thanksgiving Day**

November 26th **Day After Thanksgiving**

December 24th **Christmas Day**

The Canada Office Will be Closed the Following Days:

January 1st **New Years Day**

April 9th **Good Friday**

May 24th **Victoria Day**

July 1st **Canada Day**

August 2nd **Civic Holiday**

September 6th **Labour Day**

October 11th **Thanksgiving Day**

December 27th **Christmas Day**

December 28th **Boxing Day**

