Check out everything that plucks in

By MARK LESLIE

Superintendents and general managers across North America should check out a number of things on their golf courses for compliance to Year 2000 (Y2K).

Major among them are:

- **Computers.**
  - Every PC has a "BIOS chip" (BIOS stands for Basic Input Output System) which handles the low-level interaction of the hardware itself, including maintaining the system clock. Some of these BIOS chips are not Y2K compliant.

- **Upgrade computers and software programs.**
  - Oftentimes, you can make your system compliant by obtaining an updated version.
  - **Be wary in buying new equipment.**
    - "When you get into new sprayers, there are some that are going to have a problem," said Johnson.
  - **Pre-test all equipment, if possible.**
  - **Gasoline pumps, pump and irrigation stations.**
  - In the case of the irrigation system, Pat Loper of Rain Bird suggests to superintendents: "When it's raining and you're not going to irrigate, run the clock to Dec. 31, 1999, and come in the next morning and see if anything dramatic happened — if the computer locked up, or the software program crashed. If it does, bring it back to the current day and don't be concerned."
  - **Stock inventory.**
    - "Stock a little more inventory. Do not find yourself in the situation where you need something in the first two weeks of January that has to come across the country. I'm a little nervous about shipping."
  - **Replace what is feasible.**
    - "If it is not going to work, you probably ought to replace it," said Brad Kocher, director of maintenance at Pinehurst Resort and Country Club. "If everyone waits, everyone will be out there buying at once."
  - **Read.**
    - A number of books and Internet sites address what limited power it would take to operate your mechanic's shop. We could provide 110 power to our irrigation system...
  - "Utility companies expect intermittent and rolling problems, not full-scale losses."

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**Advice from various corners for colleagues**

While superintendents and general managers usually cannot control fallout from Year 2000 (Y2K) failures outside their properties, they can take a number of actions to minimize their effects in-house.

Following is some advice to follow:

- **Contact your vendors.**
  - Some manufacturers will have made their products Y2K ready. Others, perhaps many others, will not.
  - ClubCorp is having its properties list everything that is computer-driven. "From that point in time, they have been calling manufacturers, etc. to see if anything at all might be affected," said Dave Johnson, South Central regional director of agronomy for ClubCorp.
  - Get a written document from the vendors confirming their Y2K compliance.
  - **Sign a service/support contract with your vendors.**
    - "If you don't have a support contract, I recommend you get one so that if something does happen on Jan. 1 you can get some service," said Dominic Van Ness, director of the Information Services Department at Pebble Beach Co. "Or I guarantee they won't even talk to you. They'll have to first talk to customers who do have contracts."
  - **Consider buying a generator or generators in case of power outages.**
    - "Some of the bigger courses already have generators," said Johnson. "Pinehurst has emergency equipment to generate power, as does The Homestead (in Hot Springs, Va.)."
    - "We have generators for all our primary sites," said Van Ness. "But that won't extend to the golf shops. The main computer systems will not fall over and die, but they wouldn't be able to use them at the shops, because the shops themselves wouldn't have any power."
  - On the single-course scale, Ron Andrews said at Grand Harbor Golf Course in Vero Beach, Fla.: "We have a few small generators. I can supply whatever limited power it would take to operate my mechanic's shop. We could provide 110 power to our irrigation system...

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