

Course management software coming on stream

By ANDREW OVERBECK

Two software companies are close to rolling out superintendent-specific software systems that are aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of course maintenance. The turf management programs both key

in on insect and disease identification, inventory and equipment control, personnel management, scheduling and course budgeting.

While the software is intended for use by superintendents, each company is pitching its systems first to management companies.

"It is easier to work with one management company that has 110 courses than it is to work with 110 different courses," said AID'Amelio, founder of eturfgrass.com. "Plus, it is a tougher sell to individual superintendents because some don't want all of that empirical data in one place. However, management companies want that information."

ETURFGRASS.COM

D'Amelio, whose original com-

pany was called Computer Diagnostic Links, has been developing his software program for the past seven years and is currently in talks with International Golf Maintenance to launch the product. To develop Centereach, N.Y.-based eturfgrass.com, he has worked with superintendents, turfgrass students at Cornell, members of the U.S. Golf Association's Green Sec-

tion, golf course architects, and "anyone else who would listen."

The program contains a constantly updated turfgrass disease and insect database complete with descriptions and photographs. The interactive program can also offer tips and information on methods of application and product information. The course management tools allow superintendents to track personnel records and scheduling, inventory and maintenance of machinery, and chemical treatment history. All of this information can be remotely accessed in order to monitor course operations. D'Amelio has also created video tutorials, including sessions on Environmental Protection Agency regulations and Occupational and Safety and Hazard Administration rules.

The program is customized for each course and will initially cost roughly \$10,000, said D'Amelio. The company also charges a monthly maintenance fee of \$149. The software is available on CD-ROM, and quarterly updates will be available over the Internet or via CD-ROM.

GREENSCAPE MANAGER

Another entrant into the turfgrass software arena is Hobe Sound, Fla.-based Phoenix Software Systems, Inc. They have been developing Greenscape Manager for the past eight months and are now looking to team up with a larger management company to complete the development phase of the project.

"We are looking at management companies as a source of funding because they have a vested interest in developing this type of application," said Matthew Graham, vice president of product development. "The software will allow them to track course operations from a central location. They can take a comparative look at courses in a region and make recommendations and improvements."

The Windows-based software includes three static databases that will define all plants, diseases and insects affecting particular regions. It will also provide information such as current market value, health and condition, identification, and location to establish a green asset valuation. The program's 14 modules will include soil, water, equipment inventory and maintenance; course layout graphics; employee records; as well as comprehensive expense and budgeting modules. Cost has yet to be set for the software system.

Phoenix is now working on strategic partnerships with Internet providers and soil analysis companies to put together regional service agreements. According to Graham, once funding is arranged, the program would be ready for release in a year.

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