

DTN buys Broadcast Partners and, with it, GolfLinks network

By MARK LESLIE

OMAHA, Neb. — Data Transmission Network Corp. Inc. (DTN) grew from a major player to the dominant force among satellite weather systems on May 3 when it bought Broadcast Partners (BP), which includes GolfLink, a satellite golf weather and information service.

The companies broadcast weather through radar and satellite images with local, regional and national outlooks. Before the purchase, DTN boasted

76,000 subscribers and BP had 39,000 agribusiness industry subscribers to a service called Farm Dayta.

"We're always interested in growing, be it by acquisition or diversifying into another industry," said DTN Director of Public Relations Eric Miller about the \$63.5 million acquisition. "Obviously, this makes us a more dominant service in the



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ag industry. And they [BP] have other services — GolfLink and the construction industry."

GolfLinks owner Jerry Lemons, who has a partnership with BP, was unsure how the purchase might affect him.

"It's a change in ownership, and a change from the standpoint that the only competitor we had now owns us," Lemons said. "I own the

GolfLinks service from the standpoint of marketing and exclusive rights to the golf course industry. That has not changed."

Lemons said the purchase "speaks well for the technology we have. I brought this technology into the golf industry in September 1994. DTN entered the market in April 1995. It is a service that is very affordable and it makes no sense to be without it, even for the mom-and-pop clubs — even more-so for them than the richer clubs."

"Our weather center started in 1995 with golf courses in mind," Miller said. "We found there are a lot more people out there who want it. We're doing a lot of business with construction firms, government agencies like emergency preparedness, departments of transportation, and aviation."

BP, a general partnership, was formed by Farmland Industries, Inc., Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc. and IAA Communications Co.

HAND-HELD UNIT DETECTS LIGHTNING

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va. — The next time you witness a superintendent obtain information about lightning, the electronic gadget he uses might not be his cellular phone for calling a remote lightning detection service. It might be his own hand-held SkyScan.

Costing less than \$230, SkyScan measures the distance of lightning as far away as 40 miles and accurately tracks its approach. Since the average storm travels at about 25 miles per hour, this provides a warning period of 1-1/2 hours.

Of the three types of lightning — cloud-to-cloud, earth-to-cloud and cloud-to-earth — the latter is the most dangerous. SkyScan's built-in antennas pick up this type of lightning, analyze it for distance, and communicate the information to the user through a series of LED grouped into ranges of 0-3, 3-8, 8-20 and 20-40 miles.

The distance information enables the user to tell if the storm is moving toward, away from, or parallel to the location.

More information is available from Equity Industries Corp., 5721 Bayside Road, Virginia Beach, VA 23455; 800-972-0292.

THORGUARD EXPANDS PRODUCTS

MIAMI, Fla. — Thor Guard Inc., whose lightning warning system is used by the PGA Tour, has expanded its line of lightning warning products with a new, more economically-priced system called Thor Guard II.

Thor Guard II determines the potential for local lightning danger and displays the lightning hazard by means of an easily read, multi-colored light display.

Thor Guard II was designed to respond to requests from a variety of markets for a basic lightning prediction system, one that would be capable of automatically interfacing with a variety of warning and switching devices.

Thor Guard II is a more moderately-priced alternative to the larger Thor Guard system which is currently used by the PGA Tour, the LPGA Tour, Marriott Golf, the Tournament Players clubs and other facilities.

