

Info highway

Continued from previous page

Association (USGA) has joined the world of the Internet and Michigan State University's Turfgrass Information Foundation (TGIF) is on the verge of doing the same.

A GCSAA web site could provide a nearly instant and endless supply of information and advice for superintendents on everything from state and federal regulatory issues to academic research on turfgrass.

Web sites and on-line technology. It's all a long way from what Jon Scott and a few other curious and adventurous golf course superintendents were doing back in the mid-1980s with their Apple II desktops and primitive software programs like Visicalc.

Scott, a superintendent for 16 years at Grand Traverse Resort in Michigan and Valhalla in Louisville, Ky., has been working for Jack Nicklaus' Golden Bear International Golf for seven years. He is currently a consulting agronomist.

"As it is in the business world," said Scott, "a computer is a necessity in managing any small or large operation. The cost and simplicity of the programs are such that there is no reason for the smallest golf course not to have a laptop or personal computer on the desk."

Scott was one of a small group of computer-literate superintendents in the mid-1980s that started Turf Byte, a superintendents computer bulletin board that is run out of Kansas City, Mo. That was before pre-packaged integrated software programs came along like TRIMS, which handle budgeting, inventory, work-order production, chemical and fertilizer record-keeping, soil-testing data, and just about anything else important to a superintendent's day-to-day operations. TRIMS is now one of several software programs available for golf course management and maintenance.

Another computer-related tool gaining use with cutting-edge superintendents are satellite weather systems, where a computer-like monitor and a point-and-click system that can be installed in the superintendent's office offers instant access to weather information.

"And now, of course, there's the Internet," said Scott. "The resources that are there are just the beginning. Every major research center or university is going to have a data base that you will be able to go in and download articles and agronomy pages."

Scott said the brave new world of the computer-clicking golf course superintendent could create prob-

lems for some.

"It's going leave some people behind," he said. "It already has. I don't know how we get around this. It happens in other industries with the technology today. The small-timers at places where their clubs can't afford to go to the seminars and conferences ... they're going to have to find a way to learn on their own, or they're going to get left behind in their careers."

"It's not a measure of how good a turf manager they are. It's a measure of how good an administrator they are."

GCS provides new 'window' on grounds maintenance

BATON ROUGE, La. — Calling its GCS for Windows "the ultimate grounds care system," InCircuit Development Corp. has entered the world of "windows" in a big way in the golf industry.

GCS integrates several management sections including chemical/fertilizer, personnel, financial, weather/irrigation, inventory, calendar, math, vegetation library, references and work orders. Help buttons appear on every major screen.

Users can scan in photos of employees, inventory items and vegetation, while printed reports, complete with graphing and analy-

sis, are customized with the course's logo.

A calendar program allows scheduling of important events for the staff which can be reviewed by day, month or year. The math element simplifies calculation of common areas and volumes.

Every conversion reference imaginable is included in the reference section, which also carries a full-color reference for pH and particle size charts.

More information is available by contacting InCircuit Development Corp., P.O. Box 80771, Baton Rouge, La. 70898; 800-963-1925.

CIRCLE #310

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CIRCLE #130

DTN: 19 regional maps, updated every 15 minutes

OMAHA, Neb. — "Providing unlimited access to comprehensive, time-sensitive weather information," says Data Transmission Network Corp. of its DTN Weather Center. A high-resolution color monitor, compact satellite dish and receiver and large data-storage capability are all supplied for a one-time \$295 start-up fee and \$64 per month.

DTN Weather Center provides comprehensive regional and national weather data, with more than 60 full-color maps. Its information comes from numerous sources, including the Na-

tional Weather Service and "other specialized private providers," and is updated continually and automatically.

Nineteen regional radar maps indicate county-level precipitation updated every 15 minutes. Satellite cloud maps show cloud formations in South and North America and the Atlantic Ocean. All maps can be "zoomed-in" for up to 64 times magnification for site-specific analysis.

Temperature and precipitation outlooks for the next 24 hours are provided, along with current wind speed and direction, temperature, humidity and sky conditions.

For more information, contact DTN at 800-610-0777.

CIRCLE #323

TRIMS draws from 10 years experience

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Drawing on 10 years of advice from golf course superintendents, TRIMS for Windows is a wide-ranging software program for professional grounds management.

TRIMS provides access to budgets and expenses, inventory and purchasing, personnel and labor, equipment maintenance, chemicals and fertilizers, fuel inventory, event scheduling, weather data, tree inventories, and other features.

While pull-down menus and toolbar icons help simplify the program, "browse tables" appear throughout TRIMS, allowing the

user to view the contents of files or make selections from lists of personnel, equipment, inventory, etc.

The program gives an accurate picture of costs by time period, type of work performed, and type of asset. Hidden costs like aging equipment needing frequent repair can be quickly identified.

TRIMS can chart data entered manually or captured from automatic recording weather stations and services — including 13 different conditions such as temperature, humidity, wind, precipitation and solar radiation.

Contact TRIMS Software International, Inc., 3110 North 19th Ave., Suite 190, Phoenix, Ariz. 85015; 800-608-7467.

CIRCLE #311

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CIRCLE #131

GPS at the heart of Player Systems

CHARLESTOWN, Mass. — Using Global Positioning System and other technology, Player Systems is reporting success with its SkyCaddie information system as a tool to communicate with guests, manage traffic and build business.

The compact, golf cart-mounted personal video monitors give guests information a professional caddie provides. From each position on the course, golfers are offered course graphics, suggested strategies, distances to targets and pace messages, pin placements and green contours.

Cart traffic is monitored from the clubhouse, allowing managers to take action before delays become problems.

More information is available by contacting Player Systems at 48 Baldwin St., Charlestown, Mass. 02129; 617-241-5253.

CIRCLE #314

Palm-sized PinPoint shows precise position

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — Using Local Area Position Technology, as opposed to a Global Positioning System, PinPoint Technologies is manufacturing a palm-sized "position system" that helps speed up play, telling golfers to within one yard their distance to the cup.

The heart of the PinPoint Golf Course Ranging System is small fixed transceivers positioned outside the perimeter of the course. Two small ranging devices sit in a golf cart-mounted dispenser and can be removed and clipped to the golfers' belts. When a golfer needs distance information, he pushes a button on his unit and instantly obtains the distance to the pin, to the face of a hazard or other points of interest.

Contact PinPoint Technologies, Inc., 601 North Cherry St., Suite 230, Winston-Salem, N.C. 27101; 803-757-7795.

CIRCLE #313

Thor Guard beats 'heat'

DETROIT — Thor Guard II Lightning Prediction System continually monitors and evaluates the electrostatic atmosphere. On a simple screen display it provides the specific risk of a lightning strike in the immediate area and can sound alarms and air horns, giving ample time for people to take cover.

More information is available from Thor Guard, Inc., P.O. Box 523772, Miami, FLA. 33152; 305-594-0304.

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CIRCLE #132

GolfLink providing plethora of info

HERMITAGE, Tenn. — The first complete weather, lightning and golf information satellite service when it first surfaced, GolfLink also provides subscribers with golf industry news, updates from golf associations, playing tips from pros, rules of the game and new product information.

The weather and lightning information offers a dozen different national and regional radar maps, temperature and critical weather maps — all updated several times an hour. The weather element offers an animated forecast map; regional/national action Doppler Radar from WSI; daily forecasts; national 48-hour precipitation forecast; past 24-hour precipitation review; six- to 10-day forecast; and 48-hour jet stream updates.

The system is tied to Global Atmospheric, Inc.'s Electrical Storm Identification Device.

Contact GolfLink, 4811 Lebanon Road, Suite 107, Hermitage, Tenn., 37076; 800-200-3810.

CIRCLE #315

ESID offers lightning protection

TUCSON, Ariz. — The manufacturer and distributor of a comprehensive line of lightning detection systems, Global Atmospheric, Inc. offers golf courses its Electrical Storm Identification Device (ESID).

Global Atmospheric and Course Alert, a siren system, are providing an integrated system for golf courses.

ESID's 5-foot-high, solar-powered sensor and indoor display/controller is battery-operated and can be easily sited. As well as cloud-to-cloud lightning, it detects cloud-to-ground lightning within 30 miles and thunderstorms within 10 miles.

More information is available by contacting Global Atmospheric, Inc., 2705 E. Medina Road, Suite 111, Tucson, Ariz. 85706; 800-283-4557.

CIRCLE #316

Tiny Rangefinder uses laser tech

COSTA MESA, Calif. — A handheld electronic distance-measuring device, DME/Golf's Rangefinder brings laser technology to the 400-year-old game of golf. Instead of walking to yardage markers in the fairways, golfers using Rangefinder quickly and accurately know how far away the pin is— whether it be 30 or 500 yards. The DME system sends out an invisible beam of light to a target which is mounted on the pin.

Contact DME/Golf, 3180 Redhill Ave., Costa Mesa, Calif. 92626; 714-432-7100.

CIRCLE #317

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Ray Finch, owner of Emerald Dunes here, is sold on the Prolink system his upscale, daily-fee operation recently installed.

Prolink provides golfers all the course information they need — yardages to the pin, bunker placements, green slopes and pro tips on how to play individual holes. Golfers can communicate with the clubhouse if they need assistance.

The clubhouse can also communicate with golfers, warning them to head for cover if a thunderstorm is moving in or to pick up their pace if they are lagging far behind the average 4-hour-9-minute round pace. Rangers are provided the same information and can inform slow golfers of the need to hurry along.

Finch high on Prolink & added income it creates

"We've cut 20 minutes off the average round," Finch said. "That represents a lot more product we can market."

Finch is equally excited about the potential maintenance benefits. The system tracks the usage of Emerald Dunes golf car fleet, allowing Finch to rotate the machines so that all receive equal use. A computerized course map available on clubhouse and maintenance center screens — or at any computer — allows the superintendent to track golfers and turn on sprinklers, as needed, in golfer-free areas. Prolink is also working on a system that would allow the superintendent to

better track pesticide applications.

The superintendent would patrol the course in a golf car with a lap-top computer at his side. Coming across an area of diseased turf, he could circle the area on the computer-generated image of the course and punch in the disease. The computer would list the chemicals available in the storage building that would be effective against the disease. The superintendent would enter the chemical to be used, the amount and time of treatment. When the pesticide applicator returned at the appointed time, the application equipment would not operate until it was over the designated area and would only deliver the amount of chemical specified by the superintendent.

CIRCLE #320



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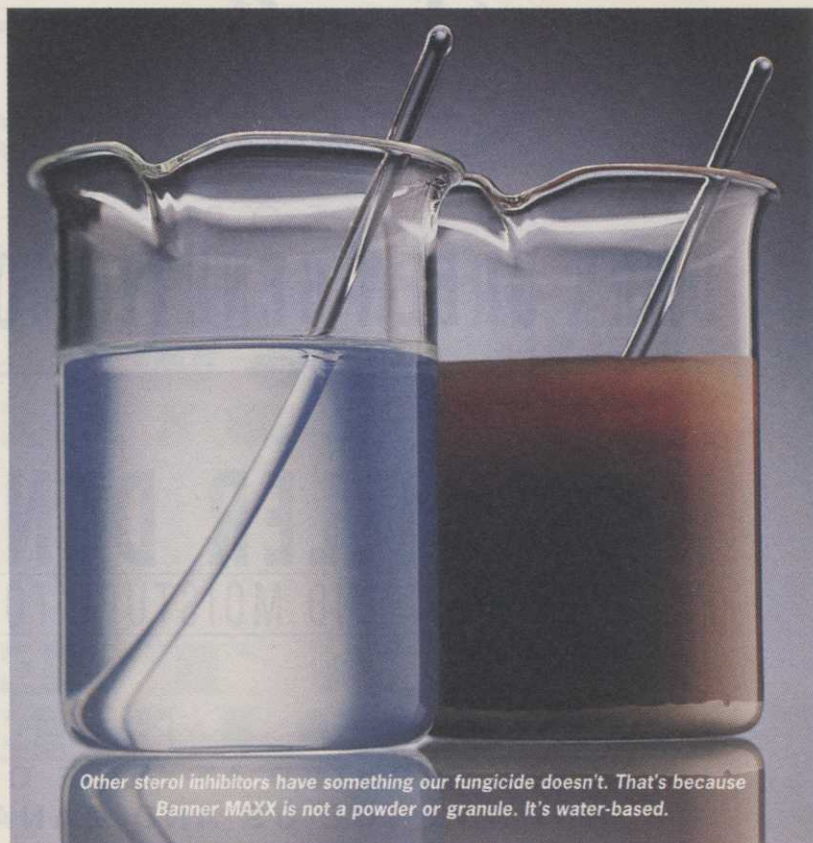
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ProShot monitors, speeds play, increases income

By DONNA LEA HAWLEY

GAINESVILLE, Fla. — "We have three big issues," says Mike Moran, head golf professional at Haile Plantation Golf and Country Club here. "Providing amenities to our members, speeding up play, and monitoring where our carts are. Installing the ProShot system helps us with all three."

The ProShot system was installed at Haile Plantation in late 1995 and it was one of the first of 100 Club Corp. of America courses scheduled for this program. Installation included a survey of the golf course that

mapped each fairway, green, bunker, and other major features, installation of a small satellite dish on the clubhouse, a computer in the pro shop, and a small antenna and display unit on each golf car.

ProShot was installed as an amenity for members at Haile. "We aren't concerned about recovering the cost from our members and haven't increased fees," Moran said. "I think if a course needed to recover the cost of installation, players would pay an additional dollar for green fees to play with it."

Moran finds that ProShot helps speed up plays. Before the system was installed, players used time to look for yardage markers on the sprinkler system; now they get an exact readout in the cart. Players no longer have to pace off a distance or take time guessing. If

each player saves only five seconds per shot a foursome can save 30 minutes in playing time.

The club can also monitor slow play using ProShot. The computer monitor in the pro shop provides a number of displays including a map of the whole course showing the location of all the carts. "If we see a group of carts on the 6th hole, for example," said Moran, "we can call a ranger and ask him to go clear up the problem. We can also send a message that will appear only on one cart's display asking them to pick up their speed of play."

The club can also use the system to monitor its carts. If one goes into a restricted area, a club employee can send a message to that cart to remind the player to stay on the cart path.

CIRCLE #321

Small office, tall order

Continued from page 38

When you bring your computer home, and its attachment, printer, modem, you need to plug it in. (Make sure you purchase a computer with an internal modem; it avoids needing its own outlet.) First buy a quality surge protector, not an outlet strip. Estimated cost: \$25. This will protect your computer equipment.

Also, check with your electrician to see if you can have a dedicated circuit breaker for all your computer equipment. There's nothing like having your arc welder on line with your office equipment.

- **Modem/Fax:** Most computers now have an internal fax/modem (cost: \$150). You can send and receive faxes and log on with the modem to Turfbyte, Turftalk, Metbyte, TGIF, or even surf the Net. The nice feature about a computer fax and its software is multiple-faxing. Let's say you have created a report for the green committee. You want to fax it out to all eight members. With the software, you need only click the green committee directory and all members are sent the fax.

I generally use my computer fax for just that case. I feel the need to keep a conventional fax for so many "as is" documents that I need to fax.

- **Printer/fax copier:** Devices that so often were only at the clubhouse now should be in everyone's office because of new technology. Thanks to Hewlett Packard, one machine does it all. I own the Hewlett Packard "OfficeJet" (\$599). It faxes, prints and makes copies. New versions can also scan. I'd recommend this machine for everyone because of its versatility and high quality.

- **Switching device:** With limited outlets, it's necessary to purchase a surge protector, protecting circuit breakers, and using outlet strips. Don't overload. What do you do with a phone line that needs to dial, fax or modem? I use a switching device from Comshare (\$175). Your main phone line hooks into the device. Then the switching device determines — through the sending tone or lack of a sending tone — if an incoming call is a phone call, a fax or a modem wanting to access your computer. Buy the best switching device. I've been burned buying the \$49 box which claimed it could do it all, yet did a "Patty Melt" on my desk on its first phone call.

As with purchasing any piece of equipment, determine your needs. There's a great deal out there that you can overpay for that won't meet your desires. Develop a relationship with your local computer store and use them as a resource. It took us awhile to figure out what to purchase and how to use it all. We now run two computers, a printer, two faxes, a modem, and a local computer bulletin board out of a small two-outlet office.

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