

scanning the globe

For most companies, bar codes play a critical role in keeping track of shipments—as long as they remain within certain geographical boundaries. Now, technology from Intermec Technologies Corp. can help you keep tabs on your freight anywhere in the world.

Prompted by recent industry developments, the company has reconfigured its bar-code scanners to support the Global Trade Item Numbering (GTIN) data structure. That standard, supported by the Uniform Code Council in North America and EAN International in the rest of the world, allows retailers to identify and share product and service item information seamlessly throughout global trading networks, from suppliers to buyers. It includes the 12-digit Universal Product Code familiar to consumers and retailers across North America, the 13-digit EAN.UCC code already in use outside of North America, and the newest standard, EAN.UCC-14.

The Uniform Code Council has set Jan. 1, 2005, as the target date for North American companies to accept the 13-digit EAN.UCC code and is encouraging everyone to accept the full 14-digit GTIN at the same time. The longer code will allow retailers and trading partners to provide complete item identification and handle a greater range of global products, eliminating the need to re-label or re-identify items for different geographic markets.

Intermec ScanPlus and Sabre families of scanners shipped since December 2002 have 14-digit GTIN data transmission capability. In addition, Intermec is offering firmware upgrades to existing Intermec scanners that provide the same ability to read and use the new GTIN data structure. Firmware upgrades can be performed on site by the customer or at a depot service center.

Currently, customers who want to support the 14-digit GTIN must change their database fields to 14 digits and add software to modify existing EAN.UCC data formats. The new Intermec firmware allows companies to automatically modify EAN and UCC data formats into the GTIN 14-digit format.

Intermec bar-code scanners designed for retail customers include the ScanPlus and MaxiScan series for in-store applications and the Sabre family for distribution center and warehousing environments. □

OSHA takes muscle out of proposal ... for now

The federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration has postponed for one year three recordkeeping provisions related to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). For the time being, employers are not required to offer specifics on MSD cases when they complete their health and safety logs. Instead, MSDs can be handled as “privacy concern cases,” and reporting rules can be satisfied by simply checking an MSD column in the OSHA Recordkeeping Log. That means that during the 2003 calendar year, employers will still have to record injuries, but they will not be required to use an MSD definition to categorize cases on the OSHA Log. Instead, they must check the column for “injury” or “all other illnesses,” depending on the circumstances of the case. □

getting better all the time

Workplace injuries and illnesses declined slightly in 2001, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported at the end of last year. The 2001 rate of 5.7 cases of injury and illness per 100 full-time workers reflected an 8-percent drop in cases from 2000 and was the lowest rate recorded since the BLS began reporting the information in the early 1970s. Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao calls the announcement “good news for America's workers, their families and their employers.” But, she adds, more needs to be done. The rate among goods-producing businesses fell to 7.9 per 100 workers from 8.6 in 2000; service industries stayed steady at 5.1 cases per 100 workers. Trucking and warehousing, which are reported together, did not fare as well: Their rate was 8.4 cases per 100 workers. □

log on in Long Beach

Visitors to downtown Long Beach can now log onto the Internet for free as long as they're within the bounds of the city's Downtown Wireless Internet District. The wireless network has access points provided by Intermec Technologies Corp. All visitors need is a laptop or a personal digital assistant equipped with Microsoft Windows Pocket PC and an 802.11b wireless radio card. Intermec's MobileLAN 2100 wire-

less access points provide users with a broadband connection to a centrally located switch at speeds of up to 11 Mbps, the company says. The Wireless Internet District, which can accommodate hundreds of simultaneous users, includes several blocks in Long Beach's downtown core. The city plans to extend the network to the convention center, marina area and the Long Beach Airport. □

home in on supply chain management

Want to learn more about the supply chain without leaving your home or office? APICS, the Educational Society for Resource Management, is now offering its "Basics of Supply Chain Management" course as a home-study program. The 10-unit course, which is derived from an APICS workshop on the topic, is self-paced and available either online or by mail or fax. Topics include MRP, master planning, forecasting and inventory control. The course is conducted for APICS by the MGI Management Institute of White Plains, N.Y. The program, which is available on a 30-day free trial basis, is offered to APICS members for \$260 and non-members for \$325. For information or a course brochure, call (800) 444-APICS (2742) or (703) 354-8851. □



China beachhead

The American Society of Transportation and Logistics (AST&L) has expanded its Certification in Transportation and Logistics program in Asia. To gain entrée into this region, the group has signed an agreement with the China Communications and Transportation Association (CCTA), the largest association for transportation and logistics in China. In cooperation with its newly launched

Beijing Logistics Institute, CCTA will begin certifying members this year. "Everyone in this business knows that China is the largest market for future logistics professionals," says Ed Emmett, president of AST&L. "CCTA is involved in all modes of transportation and includes carriers, shippers and intermediaries, so it is clearly the organization we need to have as a partner." □

Malcolm in the muddle

As a direct result of multiple business scandals that have thrown corporate America into turmoil over the past two years, sponsors of the 2003 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award have revised the qualification criteria to emphasize corporate governance and ethics. The prestigious award, sponsored by the Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology, annually honors businesses that have demonstrated excellent performance. Since 1987, when it was instituted, 46 companies have received the award. "For America to have a strong economy, we need sound businesses with ethical, responsible leaders," said Commerce Secretary Don Evans in announcing the criteria.

Businesses that vie for the award are measured in seven categories: leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, information and analysis, human resource focus, process management and business results. In the leadership category, applicants must explain how the organization's governance system ensures management and fiscal accountability and independence in audits while protecting stockholder and stakeholder interests. In the results category, the 2003 criteria require organizations to provide evidence of fiscal accountability, ethical behavior, legal compliance and organizational citizenship. The Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence are available in editions for business, education and health care at www.baldrige.nist.gov or by calling (301) 975-2036. □