

Snow report down cold with sensor

By Jayson Jacoby
Emerald Reporter

How many skiers remember planning the big trip to their favorite slopes, only to get there and find the mountain fogged in or covered with icy slush?

Larry Hambrick, the head of Portland's Micro Forecasts, Inc., said those problems may be things of the past.

Micro Forecasts uses weather sensors located at various spots near ski resorts in the Oregon and Washington Cascade mountains to provide up-to-date weather and snow conditions as well as forecasts for the future.

Hambrick said the service, which started Nov. 15, was a natural progression from the company's first forecasting venture, "Windsight", which started providing weather information for Columbia River gorge windsurfers on Aug. 15, 1990.

"A lot of the windsurfers are skiers. They wanted something like (Windsight) for skiing," Hambrick said.

"There was a level of frustration that seemed pretty universal. There was a void there and we felt well-prepared to provide what was missing," he said.

To use Micro Forecasts, customers must buy a card that enables them to access the system with a touch-tone telephone. The cards come in four levels, ranging from a \$10 version that allows 10 minutes of calling to the "star" card that allows unlimited use and charges fees to a Visa or MasterCard.

The system works much like the University's Duck Call registration, with a variety of menu options. Callers can select specific ski areas and hear current and expected snow conditions, as well as road conditions and upcoming events at each resort.

Micro Forecasts covers Timberline, Mount Hood, Meadows, Skibowl, Mount Bachelor, Hoodoo and Willamette Pass in Oregon, as well as six resorts in Washington.

Telephone cards are only available at BoardSports in the Eugene-Springfield area, but Hambrick says a sales group will be coming to the area next week, which should expand the number of outlets selling the service.

Hambrick said the company uses sophisticated weather forecasting equipment, but the real advantage of the system is that it's constantly updated.

"Forecasts will be updated hourly if necessary," he said. "It depends on weather patterns, but we stay right on top of it around the clock."

Although Micro Forecasts utilizes sensors for most ski areas, it is relying on people relaying information from the Mount Bachelor and Willamette Pass areas.

Hambrick said he is working with both areas to add sensor coverage to the system.

Hambrick said he doesn't have exact numbers of subscribers yet, but that 1,500 people used the Windsight system. He is confident that many of those will also use the ski service, and that others will be interested in it as well.

"It's working out very well," Hambrick said.

HOLIDAY SALE



KNIT DRESSES

SALE **69.99**

Versatile knit dresses in a large selection of styles and holiday colors.

Shown — belted, long sleeve dress with rouched shoulder detail and multi colored jewel buttons.

Royal. Polyester. Sizes 4-14. Petite sizes also available.



A WIDE SELECTION OF SPORTSWEAR FROM AMERICA'S FAVORITE WOMAN DESIGNER
SALE **25% OFF**

Shown — jacquard pattern cotton crew-neck sweater in indigo-multi combination. Sizes S, M, L. ORIG. 78.00, SALE 57.99. Soft white sandwashed silk blouse. Sizes S, M, L. ORIG. 74.00, SALE 54.99. Stretch twill pant with adjustable stirrup. Khaki. Sizes 4-12. ORIG. 68.00, SALE 50.99.



ANGORA BLEND OR COTTON BLEND SWEATERS

SALE **34.99**

Angora blend sweaters in tunic; baby cable crew or double breasted cardigan styles. Fashion colors. ORIG. 46.00-52.00. SALE 34.99. Ramie-cotton cabled cardigan sweaters in cream, brick red, black or hunter. ORIG. 48.00, SALE 34.99.

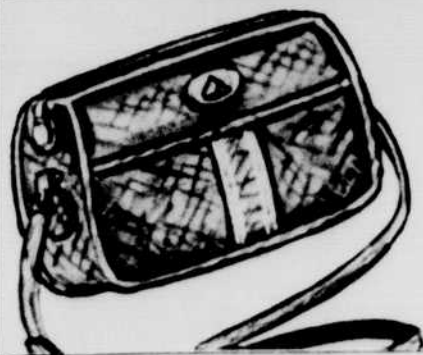


OUR ENTIRE STOCK OF COATS
20%-40% OFF

EVERY RAINCOAT

EVERY LEATHER JACKET

EVERY OUTERWEAR JACKET



SELECTED DESIGNER HANDBAGS

SALE **25% OFF**

Leather handbags from America's favorite woman designer in a choice of styles and fashion colors. Small zip-top bag shown here, REG. 82.00, SALE 60.99.



Complimentary Gift Wrapping of Course. Gift Certificates Available at all Kaufman's Stores.

