

Garmin reveals program to chart cheapest route

January 9 2009, By David Hayes

Navigation isn't just about getting there. It also can be about getting there green.

Garmin International Inc. this week unveiled a free update for its Nuvi line of personal navigation devices designed to save drivers gas.

Garmin's ecoRoute software uses a car's gas mileage and the current price of gasoline to compute the route that uses the least fuel. The software is a free update to some Nuvi models.

"Using ecoRoute on your Garmin Nuvi helps you be a smarter driver at a time when everyone is trying to make their paychecks and their gas tanks go the extra mile," said Dan Bartel, Garmin's vice president of worldwide sales.

The software's fuel report function also tracks gas usage over time, and its mileage report function monitors mileage and fuel usage on each trip.

Garmin introduced the new software and some of its other products at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas this week.

The company also announced a new flagship for the Nuvi line. The Nuvi 885T incorporates a laundry list of features including voice recognition, lane assist - telling drivers which lane to be in for upcoming intersections - and live Doppler weather maps.

"With enhanced MSN Direct services, the Nuvi 885T provides much-needed travel information like traffic updates, flight status, Doppler radar, gas prices, news and business headlines and a wireless send-to-GPS capability," Bartel said.

The company also is offering a version of the device - the Nuvi 885 - that doesn't include access to Microsoft's wireless MSN data service.

Among other products it introduced, Garmin waded deeper into the personal fitness and recreation market with a golfing gadget that takes some guesswork off the fairway.

The Approach G5 calculates the distance to the green or other important course features - such as the clubhouse and bar.

The Approach G5 allows golfers to drag their fingers across the 3-inch touch screen to get the distance to the green or pin. The device comes pre-loaded with thousands of golf course maps.

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