

## Telaurus takes on tankers

Telaurus, a ship-shore communications service based in New Jersey, US, recently released its se@COMM suite of communications software for the mariner. The suite runs behind Microsoft Outlook, and includes the following applications: se@COMM Ship, se@forms, se@CALL and se@COMM Crew. Tanker operators currently using the sea@COMM suite include Marine Tanker Services, Alaska Tanker Company and Chandris (Hellas) Inc.

Se@CALL is a satellite calling solution for the crew with calls priced at a fix rate per minute. Crew members use the prepaid se@CARD to make calls and send e-mails over the se@COMM system. Once a crewmember has established their account with se@CARD, they receive a personal email address and personal password. Available onboard or ashore, se@CARD is valid for one year from the date of first use. Crew members can request additional credit to be added to their account using their personal credit or debit card.

Se@COMM Crew is an interface offering crew members access to their communications tools, including e-mail. The system is designed to be used by crew with minimal training. Telaurus offers a Customer Support Team that is available 24 hours a day to answer questions regarding accounts. All e-mails sent to the Telaurus support team are free of charge.

The service provides 'follow-me' e-mail addresses, whereby users can forward messages sent to their Telaurus account to any e-mail address of their choosing as they move from ship to ship, or from the ship to the shore.

Acknowledging the fact that it often takes multiple attempts to send just one message, and that this process can incur extra costs, Telaurus charges per e-mail sent, rather than by the time used to send it. There is a minimum cost of 99 cents per e-mail and a sliding scale of charges per kilobit, with the price per kilobit reducing as the file size increases. Users receive a pre-notification of message charges and are able to decide whether to send the message or not based on this price.

Se@COMM Ship is a communication management system designed for use by ship masters and operators which offers a similar service. Data sent is priced by the kilobit and services can be billed to the operator, with the onboard administrator able to manage all account changes required for the vessel's business, via a password protected configuration screen.

Se@FORMS is a built-in application of se@COMM Ship that reduces the costs of sending forms by storing existing forms electronically and transmitting only the information contained in the variable fields. With se@COMMS the user selects se@FORMS from the standard welcome screen and a list of forms aboard the ship appears. The user then selects the form he wants, completes the empty fields and sends the information. According to Telaurus, se@forms "reduces costs by over 90 per cent in comparison with other transmission technologies such as fax".

In the future, Telaurus hope to offer additional services including online access to charts, music, news and training facilities.