



October 4, 2005 Campbell, California *Since 1999*

CLASSIFIEDS

ADVERTISING

ARCHIVES

SEARCH

ABOUT US

News

Downtown merchants look into creating Wi-Fi zone

By Carol Palinkas

If all goes as planned, Campbell's downtown will be a wireless "hot zone" in a matter of months, enabling residents and visitors to surf the Internet virtually anywhere along its historic strip.

Downtown Campbell Business Association President Dana Smith said that the association has been in preliminary discussions with the Wi-Fi Project, a company that works with municipalities and business leaders to develop downtown "hot zones." The objective is to enable visitors to access the Internet for free while providing downtown merchants with an opportunity to advertise locally on the Internet. The company develops and installs the hot zones, and merchants who choose to advertise pay for the service.

The project's representatives are currently determining the wireless borders and which merchants want to participate.

"We have to decide where to make the boundaries," Smith said. "It will be free to the public, advertisement-sponsored, and we've already met with the city."

Smith said it looks as if the hot zone will encompass the area from the Campbell Community Center to the Pruneyard Shopping Center.

"I think it's a good thing," Smith said. "It's fun, high tech, and everyone can use it. The technology is pretty simple, and it would bring a little ambience to downtown."

Campbell redevelopment manager Kirk Heinrichs said the city isn't directly involved in the project, but is supportive of anything that helps promote the downtown area.

"It's an asset to be able to have wireless Internet service in the downtown

area," he said. "It's another service I think can help promote the downtown, like the retail businesses."

Jim Carrillo, the director of IT for the Wi-Fi Project, said he came up with the idea because most of the business his company, LMCI, did was on the road.

"While trying to solve the problem of our company trying to get Internet access, we stumbled on a solution to a question that worked for nearly every city," he said. "The question was why would any city want to give free Internet access, and how can they pay for it?"

Carrillo said the answer was simple. By providing free Wi-Fi service local merchants had a way to advertise directly to clients who were already in the area. Businesses would place an ad on the top of web page when Wi-Fi users log on. This would give local merchants a targeted audience, while attracting more people to the downtown because of the free service.

"What we found over the years is that whenever this access is available, foot traffic for business goes up," he said. "The amount of time people spend doing business increases, so it's generally good for business in the area."

Copyright © [SVCN, LLC](#).