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Wireless Internet service available at waterfront

By CHRIS WHIPPLE

Sunday, August 28, 2005

The waterfront is wired, thanks to a new venture by two local businessmen.

Now, anyone with a wireless capable laptop computer can take it to the waterfront and connect to the Internet for free.

According to the folks at American WiFi, that will mean patrons of waterfront sandwich shops and cafes will stay longer and spend more while they surf the Web, and visiting boaters will tie up in greater numbers for a chance to check their e-mail.

The wireless Internet district created by Frank Paris and Danny Teachey blankets an area from the Charles Creek Bridge to Elizabeth Street all the way back to about the Virginia Dare Arcade on Main Street.

Paris is the owner of Direct Publications, a printing and marketing company, and Teachey owns Servicemaster, a janitorial service. American WiFi is their first business venture together.

Teachey and Paris worked through the Public WiFi Project in Morgan Hill, Calif., to set up the software and hardware to make wireless Internet connections along the waterfront possible.

Connecting is as simple as flipping open a laptop, Paris said, for anyone with a laptop purchased within the last three years.

The service is supported by local advertising.

The new WiFi wireless Internet service is being touted by boosters of Elizabeth City as a unique feature of the city. When the Harbor of Hospitality billboard is repainted next month, the mural on the side of the pump station that faces the harbor will carry the WiFi logo, according to Peggy Langley of Elizabeth City Downtown Inc., the group which raised the money for the repainting.

For more information on American WiFi, call (252) 207-8657 or 207-9050.

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