Westminster looks to offer free wireless downtown

BY JESSICA SIBLEY
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WESTMINSTER — Visitors to Westminster's Main Street may soon have the ability to access the Internet for free.

Although finalized plans are not available yet, City Administrator David Smith said he is hopeful that wireless Internet will be Main Street's newest addition within months.

"There is a company that would basically put an antennae on top of our water tower," he said. "It's high enough where it could give people downtown the ability to get on the net."

The estimated cost for the work is less than $5,000, and the job is feasible, he said.

"We hope that people will come downtown and bring their laptops," he said. "Whether its outside at a restaurant or in their cars, we think it's a great thing."

Fiber optic wiring will need to be purchased and installed, but Smith said the city might have some of those supplies and labor donated.

"This type of wireless won't be as fast as DSL, but it will be free and it will work," he said.

Westminster resident Marcie Kendrick said the possible addition of Wi-Fi downtown would be great for business owners and residents.

"Not everyone can afford Internet at their homes," she said. "What a nice thing to be able to come downtown and spend a couple hours with this free service. I hope it goes through. I think it's really positive and shows how progressive Westminster is becoming."

Smith said in the future the signal might be extended to local parks and ball fields.

"If parents have to wait for their kids to get finished with practice, they can just hop on the Internet with their personal laptops. We hope that this will work out as well," he said.

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