



Lebanon completes its city-wide Wi-Fi system



By Patrick Lair
For the Gazette-Times

Radio 'mesh' allows users to get 10 free hours of Internet use

LEBANON — Tightening the bolts on a lamp post over Kees Street west of Lebanon early Wednesday morning, Consumers Power lineman Steve Vaughan mounted one more radio transmitter in the citywide wireless fidelity system.

Eight more, also set to be installed Wednesday, complete the grid and make Lebanon the first town in Oregon with a city-owned mesh network.

“The system is up and running, and people can log on and use it anytime,” said Duston Denver, information technology analyst for the city of Lebanon.

A mesh network, explained Lebanon’s information technology Manager Tom Oliver, is a system of radios connected to users and to each other by wireless signal rather than a physical line.

The Lebanon system shaves the cost of fiber optic lines, he said.

About 70 radio transmitters, hanging from poles throughout the city, make up the network, which will be used by both city staff and private consumers.

The Cisco Aironet 1500 Series lightweight access points, about the size of a car battery, have two antennas hanging below them. One broadcasts a signal to Internet users, and the other transmits information to adjacent radios.

Each radio broadcasts Internet signals about 2,000 feet, which is expected to cover the entire area within the city limits.

So far, nearly 1,000 users have registered for the 10 free hours per month offered by PEAK Internet, though some might be duplicate accounts, said marketing director Mike Reding. Around 70 more have

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opted to purchase additional browsing time.

The Lebanon Wi-Fi service is made possible by a partnership between PEAK Internet and the city, in which the city maintains the equipment while PEAK provides the Internet and customer service. Lebanon receives about 6 percent of the sales.

, which is hoped will recoup the costs of maintenance and radio replacements. Lebanon received a little more than half of the radios at no cost in exchange for being a test site for Cisco Systems Inc., makers of the equipment.

To access the service, log onto the Internet on a computer with a wireless card within city limits. An Internet page directs users through the registration process.

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