

Staff Report
CITY OF AMES WIFI SERVICES
 July 14, 2009

During the Council comments portion of the June 9, 2009 meeting, City staff was directed to provide a report on the status of WiFi services now being offered by the City of Ames and requirements for participation.

Background

The FY 2006/07 program budget included a City Council goal to “Facilitate One Community Through Both Physical And Relationship Connections”. An objective for that goal included City staff conducting a city-wide WiFi feasibility study. The study was completed in 2007 and, based on the results of the study, Council chose to implement a pilot project that included implementation of a series of WiFi hotspots, funded by the City, with WiFi access provided free-of-charge. Locations chosen for the pilot project included the following:

Outdoor Locations

Tom Evans Plaza
 Brookside Park
 Campustown Court
 Hunziker Youth Sports Complex
 Furman Aquatic Center

Indoor Locations

City Hall
 Ice Arena
 Community Center
 Municipal Pool

Additionally, it was determined that locations with existing or planned network infrastructure would be installed and managed by the City and that for other locations, the City would issue a request for proposal (RFP) to install, maintain, and operate WiFi hotspots. The RFP locations included Tom Evans Plaza, Brookside Park, Campustown Court, and Hunziker Youth Sports Complex.

Based on input from the consultant and City Council, the RFP stated that “The City is requesting both a technical and business model solution to provide free public WiFi service.....The City has no preferred technology or business model solution, and encourages potential vendors to develop creative and technically sound proposals.” After reviewing the two responses to the proposals, City staff recommended, and the Council approved, entering into a contract with an Ames based company, ICS Technologies. This proposal required an initial purchase and equipment installation cost of \$15,000 as well as an annual cost to the City of \$3,000.

Conditions for Participation

As reported to City Council in the August 12, 2008 Council meeting, the proposal provided by ICS included advertising on the sign-in page. In addition, the agreement with ICS indemnifies the City for activity related to use of the WiFi

hotspots. In order to accept this liability, ICS established procedures to protect against the misuse of the system. These procedures require that users accept a “terms of service agreement” and provide certain identifying information. When users first access the system, they are connected at a slower speed; after users set up a login, agree to terms of service, and provide a valid e-mail address, they receive an e-mail with a link that allows them to connect at full speed. The login setup is required only once, and the contract prohibits ICS from selling the e-mail addresses or using them in any way unless approved by the City of Ames. A copy of the terms of use agreement is attached.

Current Status

The outdoor sites installed by ICS were all up and running this past winter. The first advertising of the availability of WiFi was done with distribution of the 2009 Spring/Summer Parks and Recreation Guide in early spring. A standard logo to identify City WiFi was developed, included in the Parks and Recreation Guide, and posted at each hotspot site. The City also held a “Wire-Cutting Celebration” on May 28, 2009 to provide additional public notice of WiFi availability and there were several media reports on the new service. One problem with the service was identified as the trees became fully leafed out at Brookside Park causing interference problems with the WiFi node. Our Information Technology Division worked with ICS and identified a solution that resolved the issue, but use of the Brookside Park location was impacted due to this problem.

The chart below provides information on system usage.

<u>Location</u>	<u>First Sign-on</u>	<u>No. of Sign-ons</u>	<u>No. of Of Users</u>	<u>Total Minutes</u>	<u>Total Hours</u>	<u>Upload MB</u>	<u>Download MB</u>
Tom Evans	12/9/2008	844	193	108,452	1,808	14,712	43,843
Brookside	10/31/2008	117	46	2,935	49	1,059	7,172
Hunziker	10/22/2008	74	33	1,045	17	49	378
Campustown	9/5/2008	<u>8,107</u>	<u>448</u>	<u>1,041,091</u>	<u>17,352</u>	<u>38,563</u>	<u>341,676</u>
		9,142	720	1,153,523	19,225	54,383	393,069
As of 06/19/2009							

The initial bids for the locations managed by City staff (City Hall, Ames/ISU Ice Arena, Community Center, Furman Aquatics Center, and Municipal Pool) came in over budget. The project was re-bid, separating out equipment and installation, and the City is now on track to have these locations up and running by early fall 2009 and within budget. The wiring is completed and access points have been installed at City Hall, the Community Center, and the Ice Arena. Additional work is still needed at the Furman Aquatic Center and the Municipal Pool.