

# Silicon Valley cuts the Internet cord

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Some 2.4 million residents of California's Silicon Valley will have free broadband wireless Internet access when a new network goes on line. The system will be put together by Silicon Valley Metro Connect, a collaboration of Azulstar Networks, Cisco Systems, IBM, and Seakay. Once completed, the network will span 42 municipalities and nearly 1,500 square miles.

Besides providing wireless access to the public, the network will also be able to support a broad range of uses by residential, small business, public sector and commercial users. For example, the wireless network can provide an alternative communications medium to first responders -- fire, police and emergency medical -- when traditional communications systems may not be able to connect with each other. Healthcare workers will be able to access information wherever they are, and students can more easily engage in learning beyond the classroom.

"Silicon Valley is well known as a birthplace of innovation, and this is the kind of ambitious project for which our region is known," said Russell Hancock, president and CEO, Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network. "Silicon Valley Metro Connect impressed the team with a vision that breaks the mold for wireless cities. The Valley is becoming the epicenter for innovation in wireless technologies."

Silicon Valley Metro Connect will build the network based on the latest Cisco Systems mesh wireless infrastructure technology, with a dynamic technology upgrade program to ensure long-term network vitality and scalability. IBM will provide network design and integration services, as

well as innovative technology applications for public agencies and local utilities including intelligent traffic solutions to regulate traffic and reduce congestion and automated wireless utility and traffic metering. Azulstar Networks will act as the network operator for service provisioning of the 802.11b/g base wireless network. SeaKay will work with municipal and public benefit agencies to customize the network to their needs, and will also spearhead outreach and digital inclusion programs to meet the economic development and social benefit objectives of the network.

Silicon Valley Metro Connect's privately owned and operated network will be supported by a sponsorship format that ensures a diverse stream of revenues so that the network can weather changes in technology and the economic environment over time. This sponsorship model is well suited to Silicon Valley's vision to improve and streamline collaboration between Bay Area communities.

Silicon Valley Metro Connect will offer up to 1Mb data speed for the free base service with built-in protection of user privacy and will include digital divide programs for economically disadvantaged users. It will also offer premium fee-based services such as wireless Voice Over IP and video streaming. Beginning in 2007, the Silicon Valley Wireless Network will leverage the WiMAX IEEE 802.16 wireless standard for the 2-11 Ghz operating bands, to offer greater throughput for mobile and fixed users and higher quality service for video, voice, and data.

Source: IBM

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