

# PALO ALTO DAILY NEWS

Thursday, November 18, 2006



Victor Maccharoli / Daily News

Brian Moura, assistant city manager of San Carlos, signs a transmitter along with other Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network board members to commemorate their latest project in making Silicon Valley one giant wireless zone.

## Firms put golden seal on Wi-Fi plan

*Wireless Silicon Valley project underway*

By Will Oremus

In a nod to Leland Stanford's "golden spike," which completed the first transcontinental railroad in 1869, leaders of a Silicon Valley consortium signed a gold-colored wireless Internet transmitter Friday.

It's far from transcontinental, but leaders of the Wireless Silicon Valley project believe they are creating one of the largest continuous wireless Internet zones in the world, a "hotspot" that will stretch from parts of Santa Cruz County to parts of Alameda County, covering most of Santa Clara and San Mateo counties.

If all goes as planned in the next two years, every city within that area will have free Wi-Fi access.

The golden transmitter marks the start of the network. Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network, an association of cities and business leaders throughout the region, is putting the finishing touches on a model agreement that up to 40 cities can sign with Silicon Valley Metro Connect, an ad hoc consortium led by IBM and Cisco Systems.

Metro Connect won a competitive bidding process to offer the regional wireless service, which it hopes to fund through a combination of advertising on its free service and a paid subscription service for governmental agencies and others who want a premium connection.

Once the network is in place, the possibilities are endless, said Cisco spokesman Kevin Dickson.

"The world is your oyster. We really haven't thought of all the things this could be used for," he said.

Some possibilities include the ability for hospitals to access patients' records across jurisdictions; wireless meter-

maid devices that would automatically enforce parking limits; and communication systems that would link city employees out in the field to city hall.

Before the network can begin, individual cities have to approve the agreement with Metro Connect, a process that will begin in January.

As an incentive for cities to move quickly, the network will be built first in the cities that approve the agreement first, said Russell Hancock, CEO of Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network.

The first city to do so will get temporary ownership of the signed golden transmitter, which will later move to the Computer History Museum in Mountain View.

Meanwhile, Metro Connect will soon start a pilot project in four cities yet to be determined. San Carlos Assistant City Manager Brian Moura, who is also co-chairman of Joint Venture's board, said his city stands a decent chance of being among the first.

Once the model agreement is negotiated, cities will have to decide whether they feel it sufficiently addresses privacy concerns, customer service needs and issues of Internet neutrality.

E-mail Will Oremus at [woremus@dailynewsgroup.com](mailto:woremus@dailynewsgroup.com)

URL: <http://www.paloaltodailynews.com/article/2006-11-18-smc-scc-wireless>