

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Madera County Explores the Benefits of WiFi Services**

On November 20, 2006 Madera County's IT Department hosted its first Technology Day. The main topic of the day's seminar was informing county representatives the benefits of WiFi services. Wireless companies in attendance were AT&T, Lucent Technologies, Symbol Technologies, Nortel, and @Road. Topics that were presented at the seminar included; Mobility Solutions for the County of Madera, The Path to Increased Visibility, Municipal Wireless solutions for Local Governments and Strengthen your ability to Manage your Mobile Workforce. This was Madera County's first look into the possibilities of countywide wireless services.

If you are not familiar, WiFi is a wireless network technology that allows people the ability to access wireless service at anytime in a WiFi service area. WiFi services expand many advantages to the quality of a community. The foremost include:

- **Improved Productivity and Efficiency in Government Services.** WiFi services will move delivery of government services closer to constituents and provide instant access to and for mobile government workers, allowing these workers to improve their responsiveness.
- **Economic Development.** Municipal WiFi gives a community a competitive advantage in attracting new businesses, residents and tourists over those communities that lack broadband communications. WiFi allows people to stay connected.
- **Enhanced Public Safety and Homeland Security.** Municipal WiFi eliminates the barriers to first responders' access to criminal justice information as well as real-time video and alarm data while they are on the move, thereby improving their speed, productivity and effectiveness.
- **Citizen Benefits.** Residents who previously had no access or low quality access will have broadband Internet access at their fingertips and can use this access for business and personal communication and to access online e-government and social services.

Many nationwide and California communities are moving towards WiFi services. Many of these cities are in various stages of this process including; Clovis, Fresno, Sacramento,

Sunnyvale, Mountain View, San Francisco, San Diego, Riverside and several more. “If Madera County brings WiFi availability to our communities, it makes a statement about how we are assertively seeking to position ourselves to be leaders in the technology businesses are looking for in a global market that is rapidly changing,” said Bobby Kahn, Executive Director of the Madera County Economic Development Commission. “Madera County EDC applauds the IT Department’s visionary ideas and encourages the County to aggressively move forward bringing this to fruition.”

WiFi services will encourage people to move to the County and will attract a knowledgeable workforce to live and work here. WiFi is now the new competitive advantage in establishing a community to be in the forefront of the new technology driven economy. Addressing the idea of WiFi services in Madera County starts the forward thinking of the advantages Madera County could benefit from by offering a service in which everyone could gain.

Madera County is exploring all means to expand the use of WiFi and to see how the county can use this idea and service. First, the new Madera County Government Center will be a wireless building. This means that wireless access will be available within the building. This will allow anyone in the building with a computer to have wireless access to the Internet. In addition, Nortel recently donated to the County the wireless equipment needed to test WiFi in our community. This equipment will be installed at a Road 28 location to be used as a wireless test run. Depending on how well this test run is received, it may lead the County in expanding its services city and county wide. “We believe as civil servants it is one of our core responsibilities to examine any technology that can enhance our efficiency, reduce costs, or improve the lives of residents. WiFi technology is one possible method for executing that responsibility,” said Robert Conal, Madera County IT Director.

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