

BOULDER COUNTY BUSINESS REPORT

PRINT | CLOSE WINDOW

7/2/2012 - 2:44:01 PM

Longmont rolls out free Wi-Fi in parks

By Beth Potter

LONGMONT - At least 100 people connected to the city's free wireless Internet service during the recent Cinco de Mayo celebration at Roosevelt Park, courtesy of the city's own fiber-optic loop.

Roosevelt Park wireless service is available free to park users as a "thank you" to Longmont voters for passing a ballot issue last fall that allows the city to open up access to its 17-mile-long fiber-optic loop, Tom Roiniotis, executive director of Longmont Power and Communications, has said.

Roosevelt is one of seven city parks slated to get wireless access, said Deb Cameron, a spokeswoman for Longmont Power and Communications, the city department providing the service. Free wireless access also is available at Garden Acres and Clark Centennial parks, Cameron said. Next to receive access will be Sandstone Park, followed by Kanemoto, Collyer and Thompson parks, she said.

The city is spending \$13,475 to set up the service in the parks, or \$1,925 per park, Cameron said. Longmont plans to spend \$750 per year to maintain the free service, she said.

At the same time, the city is looking for public input on how to use the fiber-optic loop in other ways, Cameron said. Two meetings have been scheduled in July to get public input. Residents also are being asked to fill out an online broadband survey.

"We have 1,280 businesses that sit within 500 feet of our fiber, so it's important that we hear from them," Cameron said.

At Roosevelt Park, 133 residents connected to the wireless access in the last month in addition to usage during the Cinco de Mayo event, Cameron said. Garden Acres saw 126 users; Clark Centennial saw 36 users in less than a week after start of the service there, she said.

Vance Brand Airport also has free wireless service provided by Longmont Power and Communications, Cameron said, and so far three users have connected.

Users in the parks and at the airport see a "landing screen" indicating that they're connecting through Longmont Power and Communications, Cameron said.

Public meetings about the fiber-optic loop will be held at 5:30 p.m. Monday, July 16, and at 3:30 p.m. Friday, July 20. Both meetings will be held at Longmont City Council Chambers, 350 Kimbark St.

For more information and to participate in a survey, go to ci.longmont.co.us/lpc/TC/index.htm.