



SALEM & ROANOKE COLLEGE ANNOUNCE NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR WIRELESS ACCESS

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By early next year, consumers will be able to surf the Internet, for free, along Salem's Main Street corridor.

The city of Salem is making plans to offer public wireless Internet service that spans its central hub through a partnership with Roanoke College. The college is donating \$30,000 to assist Salem in paying for the equipment necessary to craft this new wireless network that will stretch more than a half mile from Longwood Park to Academy Street along Main Street.

Salem officials determined the need for public wireless service about a year ago, and Roanoke College joined the funding effort.

The partnership between Salem and Roanoke College continues a history of technology collaborations. The college's first Internet connection in 1992 extended to Salem High School. Roanoke provided Internet access for Salem's schools, library and government offices until as recently as two years ago.

"Salem and Roanoke College have a long history of working together on technology issues," said Kevin Boggess, Salem's City Manager. "This project will bring a great service to our downtown businesses and visitors. We could not do this without the support from the College."

Roanoke already has wireless service throughout its campus, but helping Salem to offer this system to the public also benefits the college, largely because it promotes economic development and improves access to a variety of government services.

"This is a continuation of our commitment to ensure state of the art technology services at the college and in the city," said James Dalton, Roanoke's Vice President for information technology.

This service is considered a mesh wireless system, which allows the wireless user to roam throughout the area covered without losing access. Once the service launches, consumers will be able to connect to the wireless network inside businesses in downtown Salem or simply by strolling Main Street's sidewalks. The system also will make it easier for Salem police officers to enter reports and upload video from a patrol car. In addition, vendors at the Salem Farmers Market on Main Street will be able to use the system for a variety of services during the many functions the market hosts throughout the year.

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