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## Wait is on for Pinal Wi-Fi

*By Angela De Welles, Independent Newspapers*

Even though Pinal County reps are working to provide wireless Internet to residents, those living in northwestern portions of the county will not be able to connect for at least a few months.

The Pinal County Regional Wi-Fi Partnership, an initiative made up of representatives from the county, municipalities, Central Arizona and other interests, has successfully been working on a plan to bring a county-wide wireless network to Pinal, according to the county's Communications Director Heather Murphy.

Because there are large portions of the county that are unserved or underserved by Internet providers, the effort is aimed at bringing an Internet option to residents, Ms. Murphy said.

While the network will not be run by Pinal County, Wi-Vod Corporation, the company providing the Internet service, will locate antennas on county property. Residents choosing to connect to the wireless service will pay a fee.

"It's a true public-private partnerships," Ms. Murphy said.

So far, the wireless option has been rolled out in Superior.

Eloy will be the next to get wireless capability in April 2008, along with locales along Interstate 10. After that the county's eastern region will have the option.

Ms. Murphy said the goal is to complete the project in 2009. Officials should have a better idea of just when wireless service will become





available in areas like Apache Junction, Johnson Ranch and the San Tan corridor later this year.

“There are already some options (to those residents),” she said. “These other areas have none, or virtually none.”

Having wireless capability spanning the entire county could help small businesses, according to Pinal County Supervisor Sandie Smith

The option should be available to most of Pinal County in about 14 months, Ms. Smith said.

“We feel having the Wi-Fi all over the county will help us economically,” Ms. Smith said. “Especially in your outlying areas ... now they can do business internationally.”

Ms. Murphy agreed the option could help build county business.

“It’s very much consistent with the county’s goals to provide leadership and economic development,” she said. “From that standpoint ... let’s say I have a small bookstore ... now suddenly I have a new way to serve my customer-base.”

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