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**San José Launches Free Wireless
Internet Access in Downtown**
*WiFi "hotspots" include Plaza de Cesar Chavez,
Fairmont Plaza, and San Pedro Square*

San José --- San José today launched free wireless Internet service in three popular public spaces in downtown San José.

"Free Downtown WiFi" now makes it possible for people to use the Internet outdoors in Plaza de Cesar Chavez, Fairmont Plaza, and San Pedro Square using their laptop computer or personal digital assistant (PDA).

The project is the result of collaboration of the San Jose Office of Economic Development and the San Jose Redevelopment Agency with the San Jose Convention and Visitors Bureau, San José-based Global Netoptex Inc., and Cisco Systems.

"We want people to know they are in the Capital of Silicon Valley when they are downtown San Jose," said Mayor Ron Gonzales. "We're a global center of innovation, and WiFi is one more way we support creative uses of technology that make our downtown an exciting place to be."

Gonzales proposed the creation of WiFi "hotspots" in downtown public spaces last year in his annual budget message.

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The Mayor and a high school student from Downtown College Prep today led the crowd of students, business people, and visitors through a demonstration of using Free Downtown WiFi with laptops and PDAs at the Circle of Palms next to the San Jose Museum of Art.

The demonstration also included a videostream of a film currently featured at Cinequest, the annual San Jose film festival that is recognized as one of the top ten film festivals in the world. Cinequest, which runs through March 14, debuted Internet access to its feature films, shorts, and trailers through Cinequest Online (www.cinequestonline.org).

“We’re committed to making our downtown even better with attractive and dynamic public spaces,” said San Jose Councilmember Cindy Chavez who represents the Downtown area.

“Innovative partnerships like Free Downtown WiFi strengthen San Jose’s reputation as a tech-savvy city, improve the daily lives of our residents and visitors, and enhance our downtown as the creative center of Silicon Valley.”

WiFi technology creates access to the Internet within defined geographic areas for any wireless device with the proper technology installed. This technology is becoming a favorite amenity for frequent business travelers and local computer users.

“Downtown is the ideal place to establish free wireless access,” said Derek Wise, President and CEO of Global Netoptex, Inc. “By delivering this service to San Jose residents, workers, and visitors, we are demonstrating how technology developed locally can be used to enrich our lives locally.”

San Jose-based Global Netoptex, Inc. is providing the wireless service free of charge to the City and was instrumental in launching the service. Wise started the company two years ago, and it now has grown to 30 employees with clients that include the Oakland Raiders, SOHO Wireless, and IP Networks, Inc.

“There is a lot of debate going on in the industry right now about fee-based versus free access,” according to Stu Jeffery, boardmember of the Wireless Communications Alliance. “San Jose has joined other cities encouraging a hybrid model of free outdoor hotspots in strategic locations, complemented by private, for-fee services.”

The Wireless Communications Alliance (www.wca.org) is a Silicon Valley non-profit organization that provided guidance in planning the City’s WiFi network an independent telecommunications. Jeffery also supported the project from conception to completion as a consultant.

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Free Downtown WiFi is accessible 24 hours a day and will provide user support through the San Jose Convention Visitors Bureau. Additional free Downtown WiFi hotspots will be considered based on demand and usage.

“Where better to surf the Web outdoors than a place with 300 days of sunshine a year,” said Dan Fenton, President and CEO of the San Jose Convention Visitors Bureau. “Visitors to San José expect quick and easy access to technology, and Free Downtown WiFi delivers that convenience.”

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