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**CITY OF LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA, BECOMES NATION'S LARGEST CITY, AND FIRST ON WEST COAST, TO OFFER FREE WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS; LONG BEACH AIRPORT SOON TO FOLLOW**

Anyone coming to downtown Long Beach, California, to do business or look for fun things to do in this seaside city can bring their laptop computers while leaving their wires at home – they won't be needing them any more.

Long Beach has become one of just a handful of cities across the nation – and the first city west of the Rocky Mountains – to offer free wireless access to the Internet from a laptop computer in the city's designated "Hot Zone" along Pine Avenue in downtown Long Beach.

"By introducing free wireless Internet access, the City of Long Beach is taking a bold step to provide cutting-edge communications technology to anyone visiting our downtown," said Long Beach Mayor Beverly O'Neill. "Business people will be able to enjoy high speed Internet access, check e-mail, and tap into corporate networks from the comfort of their tables at lunch.

"The new service also gives the user an immediate list of places to go and things to see in the Long Beach area – a quick electronic guide to our city at the touch of a button."

The Long Beach Municipal Airport, among the top five busiest general aviation airports in the world and home to four regularly scheduled airlines, is scheduled to begin providing free wireless Internet service in early 2003, providing business travelers yet another convenient link to the Internet as they wait for flights.

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The technology works via radio signals sent from transmitters that have been installed along a four-block section of Pine Avenue in downtown Long Beach. When a special card is inserted into the laptop that allows it to receive the signal, the user can then automatically log onto to Internet. The cards are available at most office supply stores for between \$80 and \$90.

“We are extremely excited about the possibilities of this pilot project,” said Community Development Director Melanie Fallon. “If it proves popular with our visitors and business community, we are poised to extend to other key venues within the city. We already are making plans to introduce the service for travelers using the Long Beach Airport; we may also make the service available to our citizens throughout the city.”

Tom Paradise, principal of **Development Tech** in Long Beach, developed the concept, business model and network architecture for the “Hot Zone,” and organized the team to bring the project to fruition.

“Offering free, public wireless Internet access as a ‘place-making’ community amenity represents a new business model in the wireless market space,” Paradise said. “Merchants, restaurateurs, developers and community groups can offer wireless Internet access to visitors and customers as a way to differentiate and promote their local business districts.”

Development Tech implements plans that use telecommunications technologies to create value for real estate developers and communities.

In addition to Development Tech, four other high technology firms have contributed toward making this service available in Long Beach:

**Color Broadband Inc.** is a Long Beach-based company offering high-speed broadband Internet connectivity and other specialized services. It is providing the broadband connection for the “Hot Zone” project. “We are pleased to serve Long Beach and its plan to develop a truly progressive technology environment,” said Color Broadband Inc.’s CEO Fran McGrath.

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**G-site Web Design & Consulting**, also based in Long Beach, specializes in niche portal development including community portals, database development, content management applications and interactive web design. The company designed the specialized web portal users first see when they log onto the web in the “Hot Zone.”

“Our role in this project was to create easy access and develop the Downtown Wireless Portal that would allow the visitors to discover local merchants,” said G-site founder Lorenzo Gigliotti.

**Intermec Technologies Corporation**, an Everett, WA-based firm, is a subsidiary of UNOVA Inc., a leader in global supply chain solutions and in the development, manufacture and integration of wired and wireless automated data collection, mobile computing systems, bar code printers and label media. Intermec provided the wireless network and wireless access points that allow users to access the Internet without wires.

“Productivity enhancement is our business,” said Pam Cory, Intermec vice president of systems marketing. “Workers today are more mobile than ever. By providing the technology to allow people to work wherever they are, we help ensure greater productivity. It’s been a pleasure to contribute Intermec’s expertise in wireless networking and technology to support the City of Long Beach’s connectivity vision.”

**Vernier Networks**, based in Mountain View, CA, in the San Francisco Bay Area, develops innovative systems and software to protect, manage, and enhance wireless networks.

“Long Beach city officials have tapped into the idea of convenient wireless Internet access for its business community and patrons of local shops and hotels,” said Doug Klein, CEO at Vernier Networks. “By managing every access point, Vernier makes it possible for the city’s mobile users to experience seamless wireless connectivity when accessing the Internet. The opportunity to play an integral role in the successful implementation of the city’s wireless network was in fact quite remarkable.”

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The City is researching the possibility of expanding the “Hot Zone” to include other areas of the city. Since many of the boats in Long Beach’s two City-owned and operated marinas are full-time homes for some citizens, the City is investigating the feasibility of offering the service in the marinas.

Ideally located on the Pacific Coast between Los Angeles and Orange County, Long Beach is a community offering a host of educational, recreational and economic opportunities. California’s fifth largest city enjoys 5½ miles of sandy beach, an average of 345 days of sunshine and the cleanest air in the LA basin. Long Beach also is home to one of the busiest ports in the nation, welcomes more than 4.5 million tourists annually and is recognized as one of California’s most visitor and business friendly cities.

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