



## Downtown Henderson Project is Hot Spot for Free Wireless Internet in Area

**Name:**  
Downtown Henderson Project

**Internet:**  
[www.downtownhenderson.com](http://www.downtownhenderson.com)

**Products/Services:**  
Main Street Organization -  
Wireless Hot Spot program

**Location:**  
Henderson/ Henderson County

**Leadership:**  
Julie Martin, Executive Director

**Founded:** 1986

**Reach:** Downtown Henderson Area

**Innovative Insight:** *"From concept to completion, the project continues to reenergize the downtown area."*

**Way Internet Has Made You More Competitive:** *"It is our goal to get people to the area to work play and live. Wireless Internet is a necessary resource for visitors and residents to take complete advantage of the downtown area."*

**Advice to Other Communities:** *"The value-added impact of wireless Internet enhances business and pleasure in downtown Henderson."*

**Ways to Continue to Attract Users:** *"The convenience of the service is attractive enough. Our goal is that businessmen look to downtown Henderson as a great place for business meetings at restaurants, and visitors come to enjoy the area while staying connected through*

**Henderson, KY** - Downtown Henderson claims many unique attractions: a view of the Ohio River, southern mansions and riverboats; and numerous restaurants, festivals and concerts. But one thing seemed to be missing from the picturesque community that was once the home to naturalist John James Audubon: free wireless Internet access.

While a wireless Internet area, or "hot spot," is not a necessary feature of downtown Henderson, City Commissioner Robbie Mills saw a need to keep tourists and locals connected with free wireless access. Mills' concept evolved into an initiative led by the Downtown Henderson Project, an organization devoted to promoting the downtown, and a committee of local businesses, Internet providers, and public agencies.

"The goal of the hot spots is to enhance business and pleasure in downtown Henderson," said Julie Martin, Executive Director of the Downtown Henderson Project. "The Henderson Public Library had seen a lot of success with their hot spot. People were using the wireless Internet access in the parking lot after the library had closed."

The public library launched Wi-Fi service in April of 2004. Users must have a library card to register for the free service.

The committee considered the success of the library and the desire of businesses in the downtown area to develop a plan for wireless Internet service. While blanket service was ideal, the committee decided to gradually develop several hot spots.

The short-term goal was to provide wireless access to three of downtown Henderson's city parks, in part because of summer festivals that bring hundreds to the downtown area. The Downtown Henderson Project began to contact businesses to solicit their help in offering the service. Businesses were provided equipment and installation services in exchange for the use of the companies high-speed Internet equipment. Equipment is installed and creates a hot spot of free wireless Internet.

The network can easily be accessed free of charge by anyone with appropriate equipment in the hot spot areas, which are currently Audubon Mill Park, Sunset Park, and the Boat Ramp. Participating businesses have heard many positive responses from patrons and visitors to the area alike as a result of the hot spots.

With the first phase of the project completed, the Downtown Henderson Project is looking to expand the established network of hotspots.

The next goal is to locate funding and provide more downtown businesses with grants for wireless equipment and installation. Eventually, officials would like to blanket all of downtown Henderson with free wireless service.

"When it came to getting wireless in downtown Henderson, we had to see which of the concepts was the most feasible for the area and the timeframe," said Martin. While the project is far from complete, the progress is encouraging to the organization's efforts.

"The convenience of the service is attractive enough. Our goal is that businessmen look to downtown Henderson as a great place for business meetings at restaurants, and visitors come to enjoy the area while staying connected through the Internet," Martin said.

### About KY 120:

In the fast-paced world of technology-driven business, it should be recognized that best practices can be studied and emulated. As a part of the [connectkentucky](http://connectkentucky.org) initiative, CiTE (Center for Technology Enterprise) is profiling business initiatives in each of Kentucky's 120 counties. For more information visit our Web site at [www.connectkentucky.org](http://www.connectkentucky.org) or call 270.781.4320.