NEWS RELEASE

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Purdue, cities, local schools and county look to future with wireless expansion partnership

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — A partnership among Purdue, the cities of Lafayette and West Lafayette, the Lafayette and Tippecanoe school corporations, Tippecanoe County and the Purdue Research Foundation will allow for a cost-effective expansion of the campus and community wireless systems and sets the stage for even larger things in the future.

The project — dubbed GLOW, for Greater Lafayette Outdoor Wireless — establishes a framework for building a wireless umbrella over the whole community with a variety of potential applications in operating the cities and promoting economic development.

For now, it is a rare collaboration among a major university and its municipal, county and K-12 school neighbors in which "town and gown" are working together to extend the campus wireless network further into the community, while at the same time affording the cities and their residents, and the schools and their students, expanded wireless service.

GLOW will upgrade and add wireless access points in downtown Lafayette and add access points in West Lafayette along Northwestern Avenue near campus. In the Tippecanoe and Lafayette schools, it will enhance the wireless systems and enable upgrading of data center and information technology and voice telephone infrastructure.

Tippecanoe County and the Purdue Research Foundation will examine potential collaborations on digital and digitization solutions and services that could be building blocks to advance and promote the community and campus.

The cities, which already had fiber optic lines in place to serve the access points, and the schools were able to get the equipment by piggybacking on Purdue's significant purchasing power in its continual upgrading of Purdue Air Link (PAL), the expansive campus wireless network.

Purdue will broadcast PAL over the new city access points, along with eduroam, a secure network access service that enables university faculty, staff and students to connect to Wi-Fi at thousands of partner locations worldwide using their home campus credentials.

While the wireless expansion project is notable for what it offers — and exceptional for a community and university the size of Greater Lafayette and Purdue — its bigger impact could be as

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a proof-of-concept for future, ongoing collaboration on deployment and use of the technology, says Gerry McCartney, Purdue's vice president for information technology and chief information officer.

"Our goal is to build with our partners the cities an infrastructure that enables us to leverage this technology for all the benefits it offers, and that will enable us to participate seriously in the rapidly approaching internet-of-things economy," McCartney says.

Purdue President Mitch Daniels says that goal dovetails with projects like the Purdue Innovation District and Purdue Research Park Aerospace District now underway in West Lafayette.

"This is about making Purdue and the community around it even more attractive, while at the same time creating valuable jobs and economic growth for the state, and offering the stellar students we graduate from Purdue more good reasons to build a career in Indiana," Daniels says.

A wireless umbrella over the community, would enable a variety of potential "smart city" applications, for example, using the network to gather and analyze data for such purposes as refining management of traffic and parking, street lighting, flooding and crime, as well as be a big selling point in economic development efforts.

The wireless expansion effort and potential future projects are not intended to compete with commercial residential internet services.

The cities and Purdue already had partnered in 2015 to make PAL and eduroam available over the cities' public wireless systems, which extended the campus service to areas such as State Street, downtown Lafayette and Happy Hollow Park.

"In Lafayette we already are taking advantage of digital technologies and data analytics to operate the city more efficiently and to provide more effective city services," says Lafayette Mayor Tony Roswarski. "This partnership only promises to enhance our efforts."

West Lafayette Mayor John Dennis noted the numerous areas where the cities and Purdue are cooperating, including the State Street Redevelopment Project, which is remaking the "front door" to the campus through West Lafayette and Lafayette.

"State Street, the wireless project and the many other places where the city and Purdue are collaborating make our community an even more attractive place for people to live, work and generally create opportunities for economic growth," Dennis says.

Cisco Systems is working with Purdue and the cities to provide the networking hardware that is the foundation of the process.

"Cisco is dedicated to providing the technology solutions to help cities, schools, government and beyond through their digital transformation journey," said Larry Payne, senior vice president, U.S. public sector for Cisco. "It's a privilege to work with Purdue University, and the cities of Lafayette and West Lafayette, to enhance the lives of citizens in Indiana."

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