

# What's hot? Wi-Fi hotspots...that's what!

After a year of planning and preparation, the Chisago Lakes Area now has five Wi-Fi hotspots. The hotspots resulted from collaboration between Chisago County's Blandin Broadband and Technology project and the Chisago Lakes America's Best Communities (ABC) initiative. Nancy Hoffmann, Chisago County HRA/EDA Director, who serves on both groups. She explained the services are centrally located in each of the five communities that make up Chisago Lakes.

The hotspots provide free Internet services to anyone within a block or a block and a half of the equipment.

The Broadband and Technology Steering Committee used a portion of its grant from the Blandin Foundation to provide \$5,900 to the hotspot project with ABC covering the remainder. Frontier Communications has offered one year of service to the hotspots at a discounted rate.

Wi-Fi hotspot locations:

- The Chisago City Hall directly across from Moberg Park in Chisago City
- The Chisago Lakes Chamber Office in Lindstrom
- The Swedish Village Mall In Center City
- Shafer Pizza in downtown Shafer
- The Bitworks at 368 Bench St. in downtown Taylors Falls

"We wanted the Wi-Fi access to be available outdoors, and we found that it made the most sense technically and cost-wise to place the hotspots on existing structures," says Hoffman. "Each spot is accessible to visitors and residents in a broad radius. For instance, the hotspot in Center City should reach the nearby public fishing dock, and the hotspot in Chisago City will extend to Moberg Park across the street."

Very soon, she adds, the Chisago County Government Center in



Center City will become a sixth Wi-Fi hotspot with the Blandin grant providing \$1,500 in funding to activate the county's existing equipment.

Signs will soon be posted identifying each hotspot location. When you're near a hotspot, simply click on the Wi-Fi icon on your mobile device, and you'll come to a page that lists the free Wi-Fi site for that community.