

Free Internet service spreading like wildfire

A number of train stations along the Metro-North commuter line have either been equipped with wireless Internet service or will soon be equipped with the service, making riding the trains even more convenient, technologically friendly and time-efficient than before.

Wi-Fi access, as it's called, has already debuted at the South Norwalk, Westport, Stamford and Bridgeport stations. All but Westport were funded through a \$15,000 federal grant as part of the government's "One Coast, One Future" initiative, which was spearheaded by U.S. Rep. Christopher Shays of the 4th Congressional District.

Westport's \$20,000 program came out of the town's information technology budget.

Altogether, so-called Internet "hot spots" are being installed in transportation hubs, city parks and other public buildings. Metro-North officials are also working with bidders to install Wi-Fi inside Grand Central Terminal in New York City.

In Norwalk, the system can also be accessed at the Maritime Aquarium. "People are looking for connectivity," said Edward Musante, president of the Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce. "It's another draw to bring people into the center city."

To use the service at all locations, laptop owners must have a valid Connecticut library card and must log on using the bar code number on the back.

Preserving history with ground-penetrating radar

In Easton, modern-day technology is being used to safeguard history. The town's Cemetery Committee has agreed to use ground-penetrating radar to locate lost graves in one of Easton's oldest cemeteries.

The work will be done on a group of gravesites in the Center Street Cemetery, which includes those of early Easton settlers Alijah and Elizabeth Dimon Bradley, eight of their nine children and daughter Sarah's husband, Samuel Wakeman.

Several of the gravesites cannot be located in the cemetery, which is why the ground-penetrating radar is necessary. The work is being done in conjunction with a project to locate descendants of at least 100 people buried centuries ago in Center Street Cemetery.

The sophisticated equipment will be leased for \$7,700, which includes a skilled interpretation of the data that are collected. Altogether, the project will cost \$15,200, of which some money will go toward grave-stone restoration. ■

Land record indexes at the click of a button

More than 30 years of indexes to land records were posted on-line in April by the Norwalk town clerk's office, inspiring "ecstasy" among attorneys, paralegals, title searchers and curiosity-seekers.

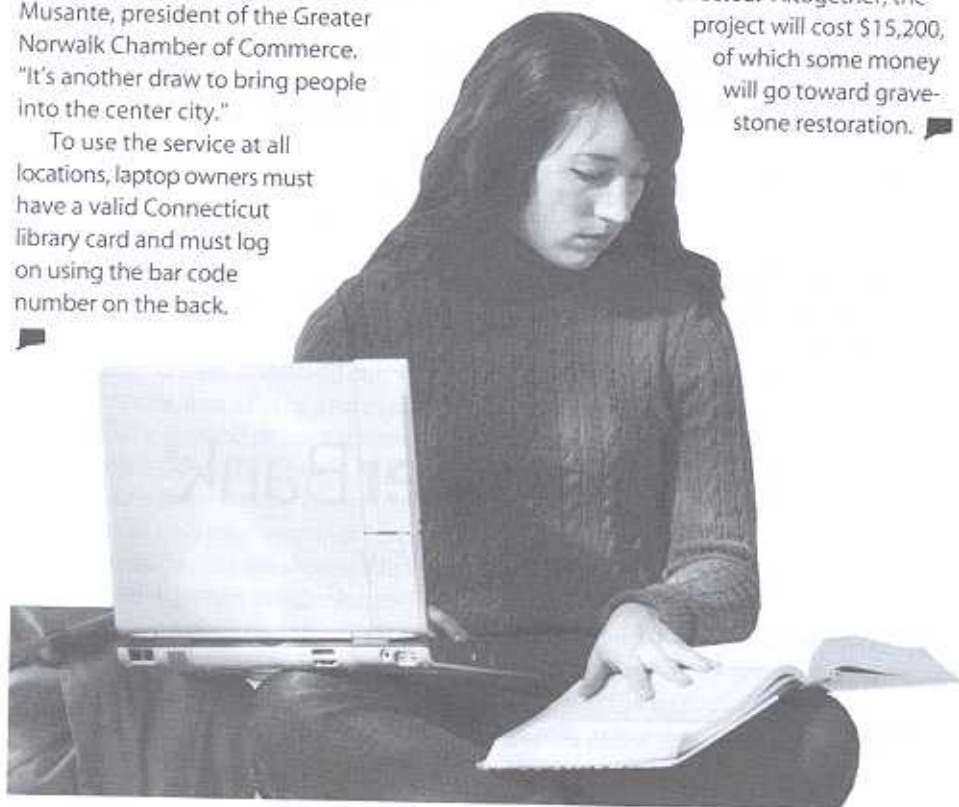
Land records will be able to be researched dating from July 1974 up to the present.

The modernized system was made possible by the Common Council, which amended an existing contract with NewVisions Systems Corp. The change adds \$575 a month to the city's \$3,261 contract with NewVisions, which expires in October 2008. For that amount, the firm has set up and installed software on the city's web server allowing on-line access.

The new information will provide indexes but not the records themselves. For that information, interested parties will have to note the date, page number and book in which the document is recorded, and then go to the town clerk's office for a hard copy.

City officials decided against posting the records themselves, which are available on four computers in the town clerk's office, on-line because that service is a money-producer that generates about \$350 a day.

Still, the posting of the indexes represents a major step forward because a researcher working from any location will be able to see whether a Norwalk property has sold or if a mortgage or lien exists. ■



➤ **Town installs 'Code Red' — an emergency notification system. See page 13.**

➤ **City upgrades a police computer system. See page 13.**

➤ **A few keystrokes can ease the pain of paying taxes. See page 20.**