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Broadband service gets approval

ALTUS -City leaders took action Tuesday night to broaden the city's access to high-tech Internet technology.

The Altus Municipal Trust Authority and City Council on Tuesday night voted to authorize Mayor T.L. Gramling and City Administrator Mike Nettles to negotiate an agreement with Community Communications Authority to develop a citywide broadband communications system for Altus that will provide a variety of communications services to residents, businesses and institutions.

CCA, a public trust, has proposed the implementation of the system to construct the wireless broadband utility and foresees that the technology will translate into a revenue cashflow impact of nearly \$82,000 a month for the city "above and beyond" the expenses involved in obtaining first responder services, all new water and electric meters and associated automatic meter reading technology.

It is envisioned that with the new technology -which carries an overall estimated cost of \$8.278 million the city would pull in 70 percent of the revenues while the company that operates it, CCA, will bring in 30 percent.

Prior to the unanimous vote of approval to negotiate the deal, CCA representatives outlined the benefits to the city during a special meeting.

CCA General Manager Ron Gates explained that the entire city will be in the loop for Internet, phone, television and mobile services through a system that will offer far more band width than currently offered through existing services.

"The whole town is a hot spot," Gates said, adding that consumers of the service will be able to set up their laptops anywhere within the city limits, and even beyond, and automatically have access.

Gates lauded the automatic meter reading capability of the system as well as the first responder capabilities for police and emergency personnel and spoke of the draw the new technology will have for industries looking to Southwest Oklahoma as a choice location.

The system, he said, is limited only by the imagination and available funding.

With an estimated target market of 7,900 households in Altus -not to mention day users or travelers who can access the Internet services by the hour, day or week -would generate some \$45,000 a month to the city with only 25 percent of those households on board, as well as revenues from recaptured losses for utilities and miscellaneous labor savings.