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Roscoe leaders see fiber-optic deal as business incentive

By Greg Stanley

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ROSCOE — The Village Board intends to hook up Village Hall to a high-speed fiber-optic data network with the Illinois Fiber Resources Group.

The fiber network would complement the village's Internet access and essentially provide a data pipeline between Village Hall, the Police Department and Public Works Department.

Above all, village officials hope the network will help attract businesses that use fiber connections to communicate with their headquarters or other branches across the state and country.

The Village Board entered a nonbinding letter of intent Thursday to build the fiber network in Roscoe. If the village nails down a grant to pay for construction, the network could be up and running by January.

About \$69 million in state and federal grants is available to connect government buildings to fiber-optic cables in northwestern Illinois.

"The goal of the grant is to hook up 'community anchor institutions,' which are schools, village halls, hospitals, libraries and those sorts of buildings, by 2013," said Glenn Trommels, information technology director for the city of Rockford.

"The idea is that when they hook up institutions, they're putting more capacity in the ground, so the rest of the fiber can be used for economic development purposes."

It's the potential for economic development that will benefit the village more in the long run than the service itself, village President Dave Krienke said.

"We will need this technology in the near future to stay competitive in economic development," he said. "This is a great opportunity."

"We need to be prepared so that, when somebody comes along in the near future, businesses out there who really want this technology, we have the infrastructure and the fiber optics in the ground. Otherwise, they will go someplace else."

If the village goes forward with the project, grant money will cover the cost of the construction of the fiber network, but it will cost the village \$600 a month for the service.

Business would be able to hook up to the cables by mid-2013.

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