

Free Wi-Fi coming to DeKalb's north side

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DeKALB – As part of ongoing efforts to revitalize neighborhoods in DeKalb's north side, residents in the Annie Glidden North neighborhoods will be able to access free public Wi-Fi internet soon.

It's not yet known when the service will become available for residents, but the DeKalb City Council this week approved a 10-year deal with Syndeo Network Inc. to install fiber optic cables from Crane Drive to the southeast corner of Dresser and Normal roads. Access points for the network will be installed on 22 light poles in the area.

The project was first identified as a goal by the city's Community Services Coordinator, Joanne Rouse, to bring free internet access to the city's most densely populated area which reports a



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large number of residents who are economically disadvantaged, documents show.

It's also part of continued efforts to bring development and resources to the Annie Glidden North neighborhood, and the need was renewed after the

COVID-19 pandemic forced schools to begin e-learning, raising the need for internet access universally, city officials said.

Payment of the installation will be provided in part by federal funds from \$210,000 from the city's Community Development Block Grant, administered through the U.S. Office of Housing and Urban Development, which will be split between network installation and paying for the first decade of service.

The city will also pay a \$22,000 annual maintenance fee for up to five years, and Syndeo will manage and market the system with the understanding that the network be self-sustaining to area residents within five years.

Syndeo will also contribute \$150,000 through in-kind materials and services for the project.