

NEWCITY CHICAGO

Wired and Ready

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Newcitychicago.com “411 Seven Days in Chicago”

Last August city officials canceled plans for citywide Wi-Fi, but freely available wireless may yet reach Chicago’s neighborhoods. In North Lawndale, international nonprofit One Economy has teamed up with local organizations such as the North Lawndale Community News to bring the benefits of computer technology to the slowly revitalizing West Side neighborhood. Motorola is funding the pilot project, which will bring wireless access and laptops to about 3,500 Lawndalers, including students of Kellman Elementary. “We consider this to be one of the first examples of how a community with urban demographics can create a community wireless network,” says Nicol Turner-Lee, Vice President of Digital Inclusion at One Economy. If the Lawndale Wireless Community Network Project, which officially launches in September, is successful, One Economy hopes to bring the project to other Chicago neighborhoods. Meanwhile, a partner organization, Southside Technology Cooperative, is installing a wireless network in Bronzeville. Before long we may see Chicago’s citywide Wi-Fi rise from the ground up rather than the top down.