

Internet company wants to set up in city

MIRAMICHI - In the darkened council chambers Monday night, city council watched a truck speed down a street in Moncton.

"Right now, this is a live stream video from our truck in Moncton," said Andrew Dunn, a business development officer from Red Ball Internet.

He was standing in front of a projector screen, hooked up to his laptop, demonstrating one of the uses of the company's unique wireless technology.

On his laptop screen was a map of Moncton, with small icons making their way through digital streets, changing colour if stopped for more than a few seconds.

Dunn points out a series of figures that come up beside the video from the truck.

"Up here, you can see how fast he's going, so he's going just under the speed limit," he said, to chuckles from the councillors.

The wireless technology Dunn was pitching to council, which already sees use in Fredericton and Moncton, can be used to communicate with a huge variety of systems, such as water and power metres, vehicle cameras and tracking, mobile debit machines and, yes, wireless Internet.

Dunn lists off all the various uses, adding in some cities they are used by building inspectors so they can have Internet on the go, quickly accessing building codes and records.

It could also see use in police and fire vehicles, not just for communication, but also to allow police and fire chiefs to see what officers and firemen are seeing.

Data can also be archived for later review.

The whole system can be transmitted from towers put up on existing structures.

"Anywhere within a 12-kilometre radius of these towers, we can connect basically anything," he said. "Anything you can imagine."

He said the company plans to expand its coverage area soon, and Miramichi is on its list.

"So what we're looking for is to ... provide \$1.6 million of infrastructure, wireless technology, throughout the city," he said. "And in turn, we're looking for a partner, we're looking for somebody who will use our services."

He said some department heads from the city had already been to the company's Moncton office to look at how the technology works and how it could be used by the city, and extended the same invitation to any councillors who may be interested.

Aside from potential uses by the City of Miramichi, Dunn suggested the technology could also find a home in tourism, linked to the Miramichi Landings project, or providing Internet in heritage buildings without having to damage walls to install wires.

As well, it could be used for a public Wi-Fi zone, with a tie-in to the city's planned public transit system. Potential riders, he said, would be able to track where the buses are at any given moment.

"We would assume that the system would pay for itself, and find ways that it does," he said.

"It would be the same anywhere in Miramichi you could possibly imagine. We don't necessarily need power, we definitely don't need wires."