

## BRIEFS

# NEWS

### Civil grand jurors wanted to serve for 1-year term

The Superior Court of California is looking for volunteers to serve on Santa Clara County's Civil Grand Jury.

The grand jury investigates county government, school districts, detention facilities and special districts, and it seeks to make government more efficient. Jurors serve 20 to 25 hours per week for one year, and are compensated \$20 daily and for driving costs. Applicants must be U.S. citizens, Santa Clara County residents and age 18 or older. The next session starts June 26 and ends June 30, 2009.

Applications are available by calling Gloria Alicia Chacon at 408.882.2722 or by visiting [www.sccsuperior-court.org/jury/gj.html](http://www.sccsuperior-court.org/jury/gj.html).

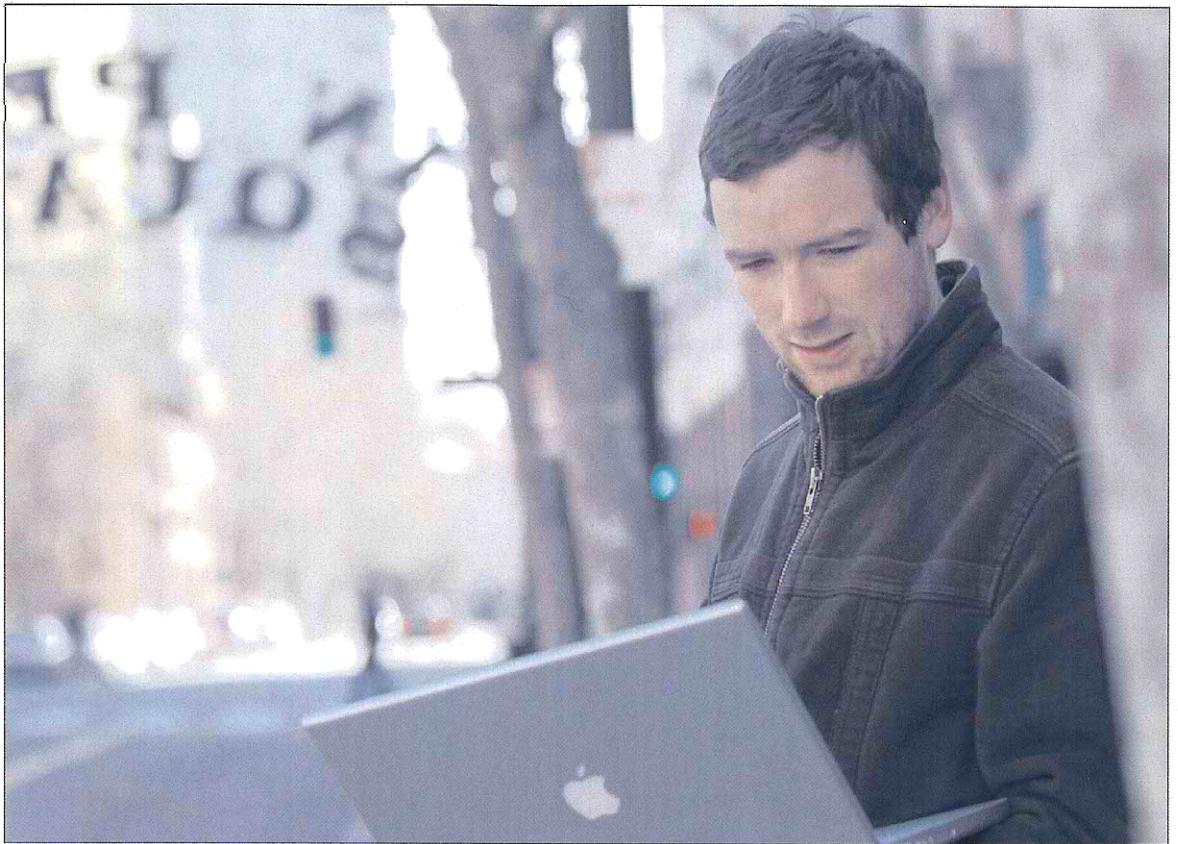
### Rep. Honda secures money for fire program

The high school fire science program at Central County Occupational Center got a big boost on Feb. 13.

U.S. Rep. Mike Honda secured \$95,304 in federal funding for the program, and spoke at the center at 760 Hillsdale Ave.

"Last year's devastating wildfires remind us of the important role our firefighters and EMTs play in protecting our communities," Honda said in a statement. "I am hopeful that these funds can be used to encourage more students in to careers in public service and public safety."

The fire science program uses authentic firefighting equipment and trains students to respond to emergencies. It is open to students in six South Bay school districts, including San Jose Unified School District.



David Scallon walks around San Pedro Street trying to connect to the Internet using the city's free Wi-Fi service. He was able to find a signal but could not get a connection.

Photograph by Vicki Thompson

## Funding setbacks stall wireless Internet network

### Meetings scuttled as city debates costs

By STEPHEN BAXTER

The free, citywide wireless Internet network that city leaders have discussed for several years is stalled as questions mount on funding sources and the best technology for the project.

City officials canceled public meetings in the fall intended to gauge interest in the network, and the city's Department of Information Technology decided not to seek a consultant's report on wireless Internet. Wireless Silicon Val-

ley, an initiative of the nonprofit Joint Venture: Silicon Valley, has been working for several years to find private and city investors, but it is now turning to businesses to help support it.

Representatives from San Jose and other Santa Clara County cities say they want to wait before committing to a network for Wi-Fi, or wireless fidelity, to get residents online.

"I think all the cities are trying to evaluate it," said Steve Turner, San Jose's deputy director of information technology. "It's free Wi-Fi, but somebody's going to have to pay for it."

The city currently uses MetroFi to operate roughly 30 hot spots confined to downtown.

Wireless Silicon Valley's hopes to build a network that includes Santa Clara and San Mateo counties and the city of Santa Cruz, potentially reaching 2.4 million people. It could cost from \$125,000 to \$150,000 per mile to build, and the system would stretch several thousand miles.

Seth Fearey, vice president and chief operating officer of Wireless Silicon Valley, said the project is moving away from consumer-oriented Internet access and more toward broadband applications for businesses. For example, health care or construction workers could send data using the network, and it could aid the use of webcams, weather sensors and machine-to-machine applications.

Wireless Silicon Valley is talking to tech managers from 23 cities, but many cities have been unwilling to pay to set up the network. Some city leaders also may fear that a free service would sap dollars from established Internet providers and the tax revenue they generate.

In parts of downtown San Jose and other cities such as Sunnyvale and Cupertino, a network called MetroFi offers free wireless access.

It had used mainly advertising to support itself, but in 2006 its leaders said it would build new networks only for cities that would use it for such municipal services as police and firefighting. Wireless

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