

ACE tests wireless Internet service

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Altamont Commuter Express riders tested a new technology Monday that allows train passengers access to a wireless Internet service.

The wireless Internet, or Wi-Fi, pilot program is the first in the country to be tested on moving trains, ACE officials said.

The technology also is expected to be adopted soon on some other Bay Area rail lines.

Officials with Canada-based PointShot Wireless demonstrated the service Monday onboard ACE.

ACE plans to offer the Wi-Fi service on a three-month trial basis. After the trial, passengers will be able to purchase monthly connections. The price has not been determined.

PointShot hopes to use its technology to expand Wi-Fi services to ferries, commuter buses and even vanpools. Riders will need laptop computers with Wi-Fi cards, available on most new computers. Wi-Fi cards cost about \$50.

"We're always looking for new ways we can improve the ACE experience," ACE Executive Director Stacey Mortensen said. "Onboard Internet access will help riders dramatically increase their productivity. This enhances passengers' lives, which, in turn, enhances the service."

Surveys of ACE passengers indicated that up to 30 percent will use the service immediately.

The University of Phoenix also has started online classes for ACE passengers. Classes are expected to begin Sept. 27.

The PointShot Wireless system uses an onboard server connected to a dish receiver on the train car. That dish picks up a satellite signal from an Internet service provider. The system is configured so users won't be dropped from the system even when the train goes into a tunnel, said Warren Gallagher, PointShot's chief technology officer.

The system will be faster than a typical dial-up modem and slower than Ethernet, Gallagher said.

[Bakersfield Californian Letters to the Editor for September 9, 2003:](#)

Leaf blowers harm us

A recent letter writer -- defender of leaf blowers -- is fortunate to have a choice on whether or not to have a leaf blower. Many of us do not have that choice.

What's so great about being awakened early several times a month by the extreme noise pollution those blowers subject us to for hours at a time? They are so loud that you can't talk on the phone, can't hear TV and can't even think.

We really don't appreciate the dust that covers our cars and windows; nor do we like the way they manage to sneak indoors to encourage us to re-polish the furniture, re-vacuum the carpets, re-mop the floors, etc., as soon as they leave.

I'm sure the earlier writer's neighbors with allergies, asthma or other respiratory problems just can't wait to see her gardener in her yard! If she is saving so much money because he saves so much time with the leaf blower, maybe she could donate a few of those bucks to one of the charities that help people breathe.

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