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[ACCESS TO ICT]

Orange Farm embraces ICT hub

Internet Solutions conducts wireless VOIP tests

BY LAURA FRANZ

AN ICT HUB in the isolated Orange Farm region in Johannesburg South will soon be used as a test bed for wireless VOIP by Internet solutions, a well-known convergent communications provider.

Growing interest from the community has also prompted the hub's move from the Orange Farm Library complex to larger premises in the Cultural Centre at the end of this month.

The City of Joburg partnered with the CSIR IT Centre, and service provider Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) of SA to establish the hub in November last year. It is equipped with PCs, printers, phones, fax machines, copiers and related equipment, following a R100 000 donation from CSC.

"In return for ICT skills and business training, eight volunteers now run small businesses in the community, offering services like desktop publishing, scanning, professionally created business plans, photocopying and PC and MS Office training," says Douglas Cohen, project consultant: ICT Sector Support Programme, Economic Development, City of Joburg.

"Not only does the Web bring access to information, jobs and tenders for local business, but [the hub] will also include a VOIP telecentre. This means cheaper calls for the community and even free calls to future linked satellites of the hub, such as clinics, businesses and schools," he explains.

