

# ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH BUSINESS

*Koman Group is spending more than \$1 million for a WiFi network that will enable tenants and visitors to surf the Internet across the 43-acre campus.*

## CityPlace goes wireless

BY JERRI STROUD  
Of the Post-Dispatch

**T**enants and visitors to the Koman Group's CityPlace development in Creve Coeur soon will be able to surf the Internet in lobbies and restaurants and on patios across the 43-acre campus.

Koman is spending more than \$1 million to install a wireless network along with technology-packed training and conference rooms for tenant use, said Paul Chesterton, leasing agent and general counsel.

"It's a tool for us to acquire the tenants who require the highest amenity base," Chesterton said.

The wireless network is available to anyone who has a computer equipped with 802.11b technology, commonly called WiFi for wireless fidelity, said Tom Blake of Ascent Corp., which designed the network. Some computers have the wireless capability built in, but network cards can be added to most computers for as little as \$35.

WiFi networks are gaining ground at businesses around the country. Last week, AT&T, Intel and IBM announced plans to set up a new company, Cometa Networks, that will sell broadband wireless Internet service nationwide.

The company will sell service on the network to telecommunications companies, Internet service providers, retailers, real estate firms and others to deploy wireless access in 50 U.S. markets.

A group affiliated with the University of Georgia launched a WiFi network encompassing 24 square



**Tony Buffa of PayneCrest Electric Co. installs lights in the workout area at CityPlace 3. Workers also are installing a state-of-the-art system designed by Ascent Corp. to provide wireless Internet access for occupants.**  
(Photo by: Karen Elshout / POST DISPATCH)

blocks in downtown Athens, Ga., on Tuesday. The wireless zone is a cooperative venture of the university, businesses and local government.

The CityPlace network is accessible from some lobbies, conference areas and training rooms. By Christmas, it will be available in the Provisions gourmet-food shop. In the spring, wireless access will be expanded to another restaurant, patio areas near the office buildings and around the lake north of CityPlace 1, the oldest office building in the development.

The network is part of an increasing number of amenities for tenants in the growing development, which includes four office buildings and a retail strip on the north side of Olive Boulevard at CityPlace Drive, Chesterton said. Koman also is building a 5,500-square-foot fitness center in the new CityPlace 3 building, and a cybercafe will open soon.

Each building has at least one conference room. CityPlace 3 has three conference rooms and a 50-seat training room that will be available to all CityPlace tenants. CityPlace 1 has a 144-seat auditorium. All these rooms are being equipped with a wide range of projection equipment and other facilities for presentations and training.

Ascent also will offer tenants a "digital concierge" service that will answer questions and address information technology problems around the clock, seven days a week.

The CityPlace wireless network is the largest one

Ascent has been involved in but certainly isn't the first, Blake said. The company also installed a wireless network at Villa Duchesne, a private school in Frontenac, and at individual companies. The school's network allows faculty and staff to access the Internet from their offices and in the science wing. Students can access the network in technology-enabled classrooms. Eventually, students will have their own laptops to tap into the network.

At CityPlace, Ascent started by installing a fiber-optic ring that links all the buildings and their telecommunications hubs, said Robert Cordova, vice president for technology.

Ethernet switches in each telecom room are linked with two of the 48 strands of optical fiber connecting each building. Savvis Communications is supplying a high-speed Internet connection in CityPlace 1 for the wireless network. Wireless access points are located in key common areas.

Ascent also designed a wired network to support phone service in common areas across the campus and a separate network for security cameras and access control, Cordova said. Telecommunications rooms are set up, so tenants can choose their own carriers for local, long-distance or Internet service.

Koman Group plans to expand CityPlace to include 12 buildings with 1.1 million square feet of office space, 300 residential units and 91,000 square feet of retail space. The wireless network will be expanded as new buildings are added.

### CityPlace wireless access areas

