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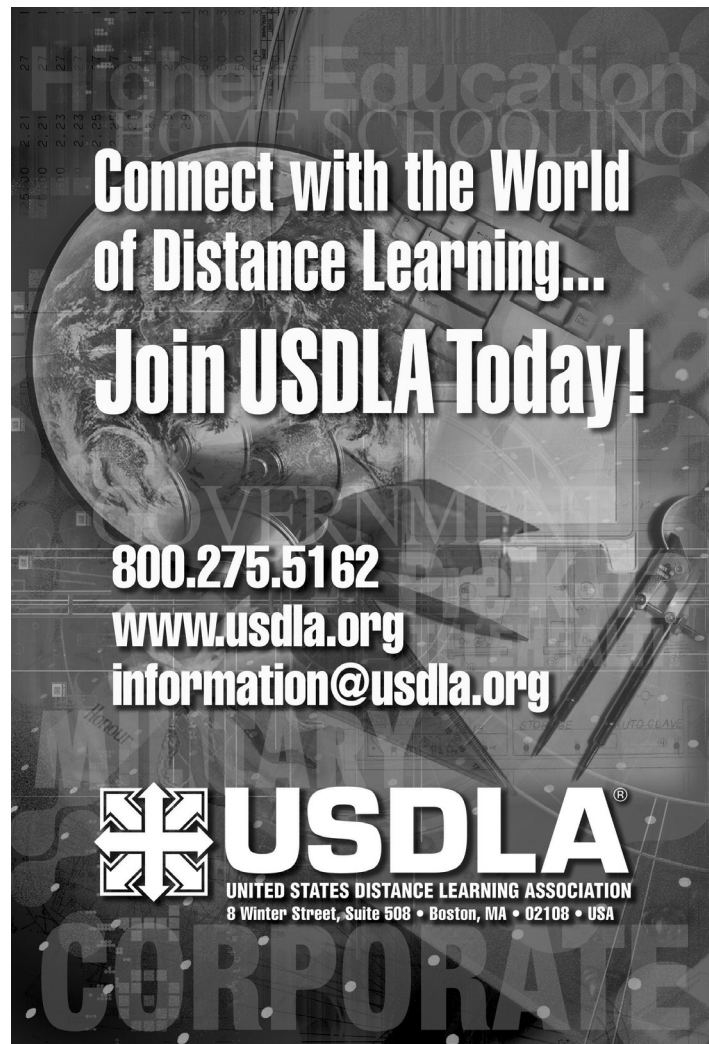
Cities have utilities that offer essential services if those services are not offered economically by the private sector. Water, electricity, and trash collection are often city services, or at least city controlled.

Traditionally, access to information has been considered a public necessity, ever since Carnegie libraries were established in almost every town and city. The public library has always been free and open. In the next few years, Internet access will be an essential service. Certainly, there should

be debate about whether connecting to the Internet is supplied by a public utility or a private provider, and this debate should begin quickly.

The image of a city, sitting under the canopy of a wireless Internet network, is a vision most want to see; it is the vision of a city with universal access to the power of the Internet at a reasonable cost for everyone.

And finally, when I hear the word canopy I can't help but think of Viet Nam.

A black and white advertisement for the United States Distance Learning Association (USDLA). The background features a collage of educational and technological elements: a globe, a computer keyboard, a pair of glasses, a compass, and various text fragments like 'Higher Education', 'HOME SCHOOLING', 'CORPORATE', and 'UNIVERSITY'. The main text is centered and reads: 'Connect with the World of Distance Learning... Join USDLA Today!'. Below this, contact information is provided: '800.275.5162', 'www.usdla.org', and 'information@usdla.org'. At the bottom, the USDLA logo (a stylized cross with four arrows) is followed by 'USDLA®' and 'UNITED STATES DISTANCE LEARNING ASSOCIATION'. The address '8 Winter Street, Suite 508 • Boston, MA • 02108 • USA' is listed at the very bottom of the graphic.

Wireless Canopies

Michael Simonson

A canopy is a roof-like covering, and wireless means no wires, so one would assume that a wireless canopy is a roof-like covering with no wires.

Well, most of us know that wireless canopy is used to refer to a "hot zone," or a wireless network area. Thus, a wireless canopy is a location where one can obtain access to the Internet through a high-speed connection using a computer's wireless networking card.

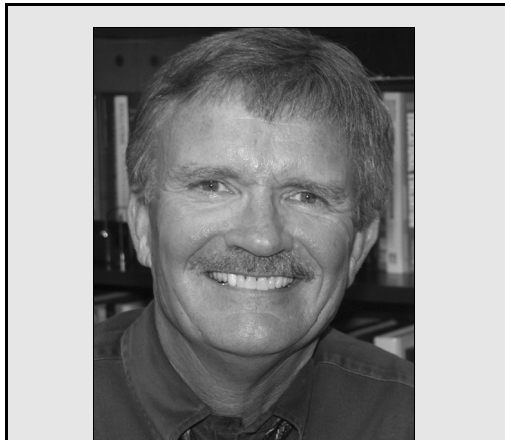
Increasingly, the wireless canopy is becoming used for global, more exten-

sive network areas, such as a school campus, a neighborhood, or even an entire community. In many towns, there are initiatives to establish—or at least begin planning for—city-wide Internet access, usually wireless access.

These initiatives are reminiscent of the days when community cable television (CCTV) franchises were awarded. In the '60s and '70s, city councils were approached by cable TV companies asking to be awarded a monopolistic franchise to offer cable TV at a reasonable price throughout the city. Franchise agreements were drawn up and signed, and cable TV commissions were established to monitor the activities of the private company that was awarded the cable TV franchise.

Savvy communities obtained one or more local access channels on the cable network, and some even negotiated for state-of-the-art production studios where programming could be created, edited, and delivered. In many cases, unfortunately, the awarding of the CCTV franchise was an opportunity lost. Many cities and towns did not aggressively pursue the potential of a city-wide television network, and today, CCTV is not often perceived as a community resource, but as an entertainment system.

Today, another opportunity is waiting. For many, Internet access is a necessity, and within a few years will be essential for almost everyone. (... continues on p. 67)



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