

High Tech Connect for Blowing Rock

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The Blowing Rock Chamber and Reynolds Blue Ridge are joining together to offer wireless internet to the main business area of Blowing Rock—free for just signing up. The system should be up and running and tourists should just be able to sign in and surf the internet from about Ruple Memorial to Knights on Main, according to the article in the Chamber newsletter.

Reynolds Blue Ridge (RBR) is providing more than \$17,000 in hardware and equipment to provide the service, as well its IT expertise for the installation. RBR is also donating the cost of support, which will include IT support and a monthly recurring expense. Chamber exec Charles Hardin said a visit to Bryson City made him decide that Blowing Rock could offer the service, meanwhile, Reynolds Blue Ridge was independently considering a public WiFi solution, RBR General Manager Jim Pitts told Blowing Rock News this week. Users will be signed in for three days, which according to the Chamber is the expected average stay while visitors are in town. Because it is a line-of-sight service, bandwidth speeds will probably be outdoors, along Main Street. Hardin and Pitts both caution business owners in the Blowing Rock coverage area that the service is not intended to replace their hardline ISPs and will not be abused. Hardin said “Our hospitality customers and other town visitors value their connectivity, so this kind of service helps us compete as a vacation and resort destination.”