PHOTO BY JIM KNOWLES

Arlene Lum, Cece Adams and Emily Griego of the San Leandro Chamber of Commerce tested the library's new fiber-optic, high-speed internet connection on their smart phones at a ceremony on Monday at the Main Library.

By Jim Knowles

San Leandro Times

The San Leandro library now has the fastest internet in the state, not that anybody's competing.

"Our library now has 10-fold greater speed than any library in California," said Mayor Stephen Cassidy.

City officials, librarians and high tech workers gathered for a ceremony on Monday at the Main Library on Estudillo Avenue to plug into San Leandro's fiber-optic loop, a high speed internet connection with 20 times the bandwidth of the normal high-speed service.

The internet connection at the library ran slowly because with 120 computers, plus wifi, it creates a lot of data going through the line. But the new fiber-optic line carries over 200 MPS of data, which everyone was told, is quite a lot.

The fiber-optic loop was completed earlier this year for businesses that need to move large amounts of data, an idea of Patrick Kennedy, president of OSIsoft, a software company in San Leandro. His company worked with the City of San Leandro to develop the loop.

Kennedy gave the shortest talk and got right down to the nuts and bolts. He said he noticed that San Leandro has an industrial zone with conduits, and he knew it was just a matter of running a fiber-optic line though them.

"I knew the conduits existed, we just had to pull the cables through it," Kennedy said.

San Leandro has the infrastructure for manufacturing and the manufacturing in the future will be digital, Kennedy said.

Mayor Stephen Cassidy thanked Kennedy and the city employees who worked on the project and said the 11-mile fiber-optic loop around San Leandro's industrial zone was "the first stage of what's going to happen in San Leandro."

As Demand Increased More Capacity Needed

The library has 60,000 visitors per month and for many it's their main source of internet information, said Library Director Theresa Mallon.

"As the demand has increased, the connection has decreased," she said.

The fiber-optic loop is good for the business of Edward Niu, who came to the ceremony on Monday. His company, ILN Enterprises, needs to upload large files that took 10 minutes before. Now it can be done in an instant, he said.

As soon as Mayor Cassidy and City Council members Jim Prola, Diana Souza, Michael Gregory and Tom Dlugosh plugged in a string of lights to symbolically open the internet connection, many people pulled out their iPhones and Androids to test it out through the library's wifi connection.

Arlene Lum, Cece Adams and Emily Griego wanted to see how fast they could view a YouTube video.

"Before, it took a long time, it would go 'loading...loading...loading," said Adams. "Now, it's just instant."