

FCS offering broadband connection

Hotspots available across county through Dec. 30

Craig Shoup Fremont News-Messenger USA TODAY NETWORK

November 18 2020

FREMONT – Families in the Fremont City Schools District will have more access to internet than ever before.

Thanks to a broadband connectivity grant, the district was able to provide mobile hotspots across the county so families in need of internet access can jump online for free to complete assignments.

The only catch is the hotspots will only be made available to the community through Dec. 30, according to Denice Hirt, director of curriculum for Fremont City Schools.

Hirt said the district received \$105,481 to purchase cellular-enabled devices, individual hotspots and the public hotspots.

Hirt said the said having internet to complete assignments was one of the biggest questions families had when schools closed in the spring due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Unfortunately we did not have this available to our families in August,” Hirt said. “When we surveyed our families in July, one of the biggest pieces that we heard was that they needed help with connectivity,” Hirt said.

Hirt said it has been a “process” to receive the grant, from application to ordering materials.

The hotspot locations include:

h Norgetown Laundromat, 155 N. Monroe St.

h Village House, 350 Rawson Ave.

h Journey’s Family Amusement Center, 1811 Dickinson St.

h The Community Fortress, 410 Birchard Ave.

h Sandusky County Convention & Visitors Bureau, 712 North St.

h Anderson Field, 1313 Oak Harbor Road

h Big Lots, 1800 E. State St. Park close to school bus in parking lot.

h Fremont City Schools Transportation Department, 2485 W. State St. Park close to school bus in front parking lot.

Families will be able to connect with a school device to one hotspot and allow a person to connect to all hotspots when in range. Hirt said all of the hotspots and passwords are listed at each site.

One of the biggest concerns moving forward, said Superintendent Jon Detwiler said, was not having enough devices to send home to families for online learning.

“We are not one to one right now,” Detwiler said. Detwiler said the district is concerned about what would happen if schools had to go to all online learning if the virus continues spreading.

He did say the district has many families that would be able to accommodate for online learning only.

Looking ahead, Hirt said the district doesn’t know if grants will be available when school resumes in January.

Detwiler said he believes the grant only runs through Dec. 30 because of “misplaced hope” that the virus would not be raging in Ohio. In recent weeks, the state and local numbers have skyrocketed, with Ohio setting records for daily cases.

People who are in need of Wi-Fi in their homes to assist with viewing or completing schoolwork should contact the building princip