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## Communication gap

*Tall structures sought in Essex County for cell coverage*

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ELIZABETHTOWN — Communities in Essex County are going to be asked to look around for existing tall structures that could host cell antennas.

The information will be used to create a countywide database, making it easier for cellular providers to locate in the county, County Industrial Development Agency Co-Director Jody Olcott said Monday.

The database will be known as CALL (Cellular Access at the Local Level), and information can be entered at a Web site set up for the program.

Olcott said the Vermont Telecom Authority, which has done a similar study in the Green Mountain State, contacted her to start the process in Essex County.

"It's using existing structures in your town for cellular or wireless. Proactively marketing Essex County to wireless providers, I think is a good idea. We're moving ahead."

Sen. Betty Little (R-Queensbury) is on board with the project and offering assistance, Olcott said.

The next step is to compile a database of existing structures in each town that could host a cell antenna, such as water towers, church steeples, bell towers and cupolas.

Many cell companies will pay as much as \$1,000-a-month rental for those locations.

In Vermont, many farmers have leased space at the top of grain silos for cell sites.

"We would have it so when someone came to the county interested in doing business here, we'd have all the legwork done," Olcott said.

The IDA will ask for five to seven locations in each community, she said.

"It doesn't matter if they're publicly owned or privately owned. We'll compile it, and that will be the end of it; we won't act as the middleman. The town (or owner) would act as the wireless-site provider."

Over the next two weeks, Olcott said, she would be talking with each town supervisor in the county to discuss potential locations.

She said the Adirondack Park Agency has said it would approve cellular sites using pre-existing structures about two weeks from submission of a complete application.

"The thinking behind this is to apply traditional economic-development practices so that municipalities can pre-permit the taller structures within their towns and villages."

One example of a cell antenna on an existing structure is the Elizabethtown Town Hall bell tower, where Verizon has an antenna located inside.

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