

Wired for learning

With a little help, students, staff back online

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It was an emergency for Central Heights.

And the county's new emergency communications tower near Lane came to the rescue. Soon students and staff at Central Heights will be back surfing the Net.

A crew working for a Paola-based wireless Internet provider climbed the tower Tuesday to install transmitter equipment that will restore the school district's Internet and e-mail service.

Central Heights, which heavily is dependent on the Internet, and most of southern Franklin County have been blacked out for more than a week since the school's Internet service provider closed its doors. Because of its rural location, the school's high-speed Internet has to be offered as "wireless" service.

The outage prompted a frantic search for a new provider, Deanne Alexander, Central Heights superintendent, said.

Midwest Connections, Inc., a Paola-based company that offers SPEEDWAVE high-speed wireless Internet service and covers 4,000 square miles along the eastern border of Kansas, agreed to serve the district.

The district then asked the county for space for transmitting equipment on the county's tower at Lane.

Although the contract was voted on by the Franklin County Commission this morning, county officials gave the OK last week.

"I don't have a problem



Photo by Mindy Ricketts/The Ottawa Herald

Brent Randel, Ottawa, an installer for Midwest Connections, Inc., ascends a tower near Lane to install Internet for Central Heights. The school has been without Internet and e-mail service, which it is heavily dependent on, for more than a week after its wireless Internet provider closed its doors. Franklin County agreed to allow the school's new provider to place a transmitter on its tower. The commissioners formally approved the contract this morning.

with it," Commissioner Don Stottlemire said. "The county administrator and the staff had it taken care of."

The school district was grateful for the county's fast response, Alexander said.

"Without this permission, Central Heights and the community members who were without an Internet provider were in a dilemma," she said. "The commissioners and the

administrator understood the dire circumstances this caused our district.

"They acted promptly and set the wheels in motion to get us back on the Internet and for this we are very grateful."

The new service will be a benefit not only to the school but southern Franklin County as well, she said.

The SPEEDWAVE Wireless Internet transmits "infor-

mation packets" over air waves from towers to schools, businesses and homes without the need for telephone lines, Josh White, Midwest Connections, Inc. vice president, sales, said.

The speed of the wireless service allows for fast downloads and uploads, multiple computer connections to the Internet and several other types of services, he said.