

Aerospace might test in Calaveras

By Dana M. Nichols
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SAN ANDREAS - Aerospace Corp. representatives are considering construction of a high-speed communications system in Calaveras County that could help during emergencies and boost economic development.

The idea is to provide cheap broadband to remote areas.

Clay Hawkins, the county's chief assistant administrative officer, and Supervisor Steve Wilensky said they have had two meetings with representatives of Aerospace.

They said if the project happens, it might be funded by a U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant.

"There's no cost involved" to Calaveras, Hawkins said.

He said Aerospace is interested in Calaveras because it could provide a test case for how improved communications could boost economic growth in a depressed rural area.

Aerospace is best known for building spacecraft and spy satellites. But as funding for military machinery and space exploration shrinks, the corporation is looking for ways to use its expertise on Earth, Wilensky said. He said the Aerospace representatives also have local ties.

"One of them lives in District 2," Wilensky said, referring to the area he represents, which includes Mountain Ranch, West Point and Mokelumne Hill.

Wilensky and Hawkins did not name the Aerospace representatives.

Pam Keeton, a spokeswoman for Aerospace Corp., said the company is not currently doing any work in Calaveras County.

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