

Masts put communities in 3G fast lane

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Wireless mobile internet coverage has been installed in two of Norfolk's "not-spot" areas.

People in Reepham and Croxton, near Thetford, are celebrating after being connected to 3G coverage through Vodafone's Rural Open Sure Signal (ROSS) programme.

Jorge Fernandes, Vodafone UK chief technology officer, said: "Mobile connectivity is an essential service for communities and businesses to thrive in today's digital world and support local economies.

"The amount of data passing through the units already shows the significant benefit the technology is making to these communities."

The ROSS programme uses Vodafone's Sure Signal technology to bring 3G voice services and access to the internet via mobile devices to rural communities.

About the size of a cereal box, the Open Sure Signal units connect to existing broadband lines to create 3G coverage.

Broadland MP Keith Simpson, who lives in Reepham, said: "This is a wonderful example of local communities, councils and consumer organisations working together to deliver communications fit for the 21st century and I am pleased to have been able to help in securing this



■ Croxton becomes one of the 100 villages in Norfolk to get a 3G signal via Vodafone. Pictured are, front, left to right, Doug Stephen, Vodafone's Patrick Toyn-Sewell and MP Liz Truss, with the village hall committee and parish councillors in the background..

Picture:

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very important milestone for Reepham."

Businesses in Reepham have been campaigning for years for improved coverage.

Brenda Gostling, chairman of Reepham chamber of commerce, said: "The Vodafone Rural Open Sure Signal project has given us an enormous boost."

A mast at Croxton Village Hall was also unveiled, with parish councillors, Norfolk county councillor Ian Monson, and Elizabeth Truss, MP for South West Norfolk, on hand to try out the new boosted signal.

Doug Stephen, parish councillor, said he was delighted with the new service.

"Not having a signal has been a

tremendous pain for everyone in the village," he said.

"Now we are all connected, including farmers out in the fields and anyone who uses the village hall for functions, and it's fantastic," he said.

■ Do you struggle for a mobile signal?
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