



## **WIREDWEST CELEBRATES MILESTONES AND PATH FORWARD ON FIRST ANNIVERSARY**

Northampton, MA (WiredWest), August 13 2012: *WiredWest Communications Cooperative Corporation celebrates its first anniversary today amid key efforts to bring the network to fruition.*

The WiredWest Communications Cooperative was formed on August 13, 2011 by 22 Western Massachusetts towns that had voted to create Municipal Lighting Plant (MLP) departments. The MLP legislation, Chapter 164 of Massachusetts General Laws, is over 100 years old, and was originally created to enable towns without electricity to build their own electric systems. In 1996, the capacity to offer telecommunications service was added to the legislation.

Over the past 12 months, an additional 16 towns have formed MLP departments and joined WiredWest, bringing the Cooperative membership to [37 member towns](#) eager to have the state-of-the-art WiredWest fiber-optic network built.

Significant work has been undertaken to create a comprehensive business plan that will enable financing of the project. That work was made possible by grants from the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, and the Central Berkshire Fund – in addition to donations, cooperative membership fees, and thousands of volunteer hours.

The first major endeavor was creating a GIS map database of all utility poles, structures and roads in WiredWest towns for engineering use. Potential network distribution locations in each town were also visited and evaluated.

In January, WiredWest issued a [Request for Information \(RFI\) for Engineering Services](#), and more recently, [Request for Proposal \(RFP\) for high level network design and cost estimation](#). For the recent RFP, 12 responses were submitted by experienced American fiber network engineering firms. After extensive review and due diligence, Wired West chose the [Matrix Design Group](#) of East Hanover, NJ, to complete the contract. They have designed and built fiber networks extensively in the Northeast, including Massachusetts, completing projects for private and public sector interests, in urban, suburban and rural areas. The work by Matrix is scheduled to be completed in early October, and will be used in WiredWest's business plan and for financing.

In April, WiredWest completed a comprehensive market survey, conducted by [Market Street Research](#). The survey results indicate strong demand for the network, and provide important information for WiredWest pricing and packaging decisions, and subscription rate estimates.

Last week WiredWest launched its online [Support Card](#), a request form for internet, phone and TV/video services from the future WiredWest network. A printed version of the card will also be delivered to residents in each town over the next several weeks. The results will be used to support financing and in decisions relating to where and when towns will be wired.

WiredWest will be focused on finalizing the business plan, including information from the network design and cost estimation, and the Support Card campaign, over the next couple of months. In addition, WiredWest will be working on potential financing options and an economic impact study to quantify the regional economic impact of the network.

**About WiredWest:**

WiredWest is a municipal cooperative of [Western Massachusetts towns](#) working on designing, building and operating a fiber-optic network that will offer comprehensive, affordable and reliable internet, phone and video services to member town residents, businesses and institutions who want service.

A video compilation of legislators, businesspeople, educators, students and professionals talking about the proposed WiredWest network is available for online viewing [here](#).

**Contact:** Monica Webb, Chair and Spokesperson: [monica@wiredwest.net](mailto:monica@wiredwest.net) phone: 413.528.2357

###