

WIREDWEST MEETS KEY PROJECT MILESTONE

WiredWest is a municipal broadband project that includes 47 towns working together to build and operate a last-mile, fiber-to-the-premises network for Western Massachusetts communities unserved and underserved by high-speed broadband. The WiredWest project covers 1,445 square miles; more than 27,000 households; 3,000 businesses; and dozens of community institutions.

WiredWest is proposing a network capable of supporting not just internet, phone and television, but also advanced services such as telehealth and business-class applications and services required to support economic development and job creation in Western Massachusetts.

This week WiredWest town delegates chose a preferred governance structure to be submitted for approval by individual towns. This critical project milestone keeps the WiredWest effort on track and positioned to serve residents and businesses once the Massachusetts Broadband Institute "middle mile" project is ready.

Ashfield, MA (WiredWest), September 13, 2010 – On Saturday, September 11th, delegates from WiredWest towns decided the organization would be formed as a public co-operative, made up of member towns. This structure was selected after months of research, consideration of 12 potential options, and recommendation from the project's Steering Committee. Governance structure is critical to formalizing the relationship between participating WiredWest towns, and creating a vehicle to capitalize and operate the network.

Research on potential forms of governance was conducted by counsel and consultants with the assistance of WiredWest's Steering Committee and delegates. Municipal counsel was provided with support from Berkshire Regional Planning Commission and Franklin County Council of Governments. David Shaw, of Kirton & McConkie assisted as project counsel for WiredWest. Shaw is one of the country's most experienced attorneys in community broadband. Working with legal counsel and providing overall guidance was Design Nine, an international consulting firm with an extensive profile designing and building community broadband networks. Design Nine's services to WiredWest are provided by the Massachusetts Broadband Institute.

A public co-operative enables WiredWest to move forward legally, practically and financially. Work on other aspects of the project, including engineering, business planning and financing, is proceeding simultaneously over the next several months, to ensure WiredWest is positioned to secure financing and begin construction as soon as enough towns officially join the Co-operative.

The WiredWest Steering Committee and town delegates will conduct extensive outreach on the benefits of a fiber-to-the-premises, open-access network, and the advantages of working together through the public Co-operative.

About WiredWest:

WiredWest is a community organization with the mission of designing, building and operating a community-owned, open-access, fiber-optic network in member towns. The network will enable multiple service providers to offer affordable and high quality internet, phone, television and ancillary services to residents, businesses and institutions who want service. More information is available at www.wiredwest.net

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