

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What about drops to the home and installation charges?

It is up to your town to decide which homes get connected and how to pay for the cost of running fiber from the curb to each home and installing in-home electronics. This is all part of the build process. WiredWest will charge a \$99 one-time activation fee to begin service at a home following the build.

What about vacation/part time subscribers?

Part-time residents can start and stop internet service at will. Customers who have phone service must pay a minimum charge of \$10/mo fee to keep their phone number while their service is suspended.

When will we actually get broadband?

It is up to your town to build your network with or without the assistance of the MBI. After your network is built, you can begin service with WiredWest. So, your town's timeline depends on when you can get your network built. Typically the whole process to build a fiber network takes 2-3 years.

If everyone is building their own network, how does the technology work together?

WiredWest will provide basic equipment and design specifications that should be built into your network. These specifications will meet industry standards. The MBI has said that they were planning to incorporate regional design anyway into their build so this will add negligible cost.

How does MBI play into this?

Hopefully not at all. The MBI is only concerned with managing the build at this point and have stated that operations of networks are up to the towns.

How many years does a town have to commit to WiredWest?

Five years.

What if the cooperative doesn't have enough money to operate?

The WiredWest board (made of delegates from each member town) will monitor closely the cash flow for the cooperative. In case there is a shortfall, subscriber rates could be increased to cover the difference, in the following year. The current business plan is designed to be very conservative and makes every effort to ensure that the cooperative is a success. Please have your finance committee contact the WiredWest team to explore the business model and pricing structure in depth if you have any concerns.

What if the cooperative has more than enough money to operate?

The WiredWest board (made of delegates from each member town) will decide how to use the excess. First priority is accumulating reserves sufficient to handle emergencies like ice storms. Then, any excess funds will be returned to the towns proportional to top line subscription revenue. In future years, prices could be reduced if there is a lot of excess money; but please do not count on this happening.

How long are rates guaranteed from the vendor?

Minimum 3 years.

Who controls the subscriber rates?

The WiredWest board (made of delegates from each member town) will control the subscriber rates by 2/3 majority vote. Rates are determined by how much contracted vendors are charging to deliver service, combined with other operation expenses such as insurance and maintenance. To see how rates are calculated under the current model, please contact the WiredWest team.

How many towns need to sign on to make this work?

There is no easy answer because it depends on how many subscribers are in each of the joining towns but the current rates could work for as few as five towns.

What happens if a town gets hit with ice storm or other weather event and causes massive damage?

In the case of a large ice storm that damages parts of the network, crews would immediately be sent out to make repairs. The ring structure of the design means that service could be rerouted instantly in many situations so customers would not lose service. Payment for the repairs would either be paid for by operations reserves or in the case of larger storms or damage, paid for by insurance retained specifically for weather events. One of the benefits of the regional model is that a weather event is unlikely to cause a financial emergency since the risk is spread out between all member towns. All towns share in the risk and benefits.

Do we have to vote again at Town Meeting?

Most towns do not have to vote again. If your town has already approved the tax bond to finance the build of your network, then you have what you need to start your broadband project. Remember, the WiredWest solution is a way to sustainably operate and maintain your network using a regional cooperative – but your town must build it first!

What is Depreciation Reserve?

State law requires each town to set aside at least 3% annually of the cost of assets that need to be replaced. In the case of a fiber network, this means 3% of the total value of the replaceable portions of your entire network needs to be held in a “savings” account in each town, and spent by the town when it is time to replace parts of the network. This money cannot be used for any other purpose, per state law. Town MLP’s may petition the DPU to put an amount different than 3% in each year.

What happens if homes want to sign up much later than initial sign up period or newly constructed homes need to be connected?

This will be determined as a policy for each town since it relates to the network build and ownership.

What are the next steps for my town?

1. Carefully examine your town finances to verify that your town can afford to build the network, and to operate it using the competitively-priced services offered by WiredWest.
2. Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with WiredWest, indicating that your town wishes to use WiredWest services after your network is built. Knowing which towns are “in” will greatly help the planning, design and build process!
3. Build your network with the help of the MBI or independently.
4. WiredWest will assist with town-wide marketing and advertising and help your townspeople sign up and begin service.