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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WiredWest Cooperative to Present Regional Broadband Solution

WiredWest, a Municipal Light Plan Cooperative made up of 27 member towns in western Massachusetts, will hold a workshop for interested town officials on Saturday, Jan. 28, 2017, at 9:30 a.m. at the JFK Middle School, 100 Bridge Road, Florence (Northampton) MA. The organization will present, for the first time, a regional solution for operation of a broadband fiber-to-the-home network in any of the unserved towns in western Massachusetts that choose to join. WiredWest will also inform town officials what the actual costs to their subscribers will be under the plan.

Over the past year, as our member towns have worked their way through the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) Readiness Assessment process, WiredWest has explored options to operate those networks on a regional basis. While MBI policy states that each town must own its individual network, many towns have made it clear that they want and need their networks to be operated on a regional basis in order to achieve cost efficiencies, provide customers with affordable rates for services, and assure their long-term sustainability. They simply cannot proceed on their own. We also know that many of these same towns have little or no interest in running these operations due to lack of resources, expertise and institutional knowledge of the telecommunications industry.

WiredWest has consistently maintained that the lowest cost to subscribers will be achieved through a regional management structure that takes advantage of the inherent cost savings gained through regionalization. The plan to be presented at Saturday's workshop is a prime example of inter-municipal cooperation, collaboration, and regional service delivery as is prescribed in Sections 240 & 241 of the Municipal Modernization Act of 2016.

The WiredWest regional solution is designed to allow for essential services (Internet Service Provider, network operations, billing, customer service, maintenance etc.) to be provided by and contracted with an existing entity already engaged in providing these services here in Massachusetts under a WiredWest umbrella. The organization is in negotiations and is close to finalizing an agreement with an established regional vendor. In addition to providing essential services to towns and subscribers, the WiredWest cooperative will be responsible for handling other Municipal Light Plant (MLP) responsibilities for member towns, including pole licensing, rental and insurance.

Based on our negotiations and cost estimates for other MLP costs, the WiredWest Board of Directors has unanimously approved a new pricing plan that will be both attractive to consumers and competitive with what they have today. Towns will only be individually responsible for debt incurred in building their town-owned

infrastructure and for their depreciation reserves. As such, each town will have the option of adding surcharges to subscriber bills in their town to cover some or all of these costs should they choose to.

The meeting on January 28 will be the first opportunity to present our solution to town leaders in a public forum. Towns will have the opportunity to calculate the actual costs to their town's subscribers at the workshop. Each town will also be provided with documentation and spreadsheets for further study and follow-up questions. Copies of all materials will also be available to the media. We hope that you or representatives from your office can join us. We are also happy to speak with and/or meet with you at your convenience.

WiredWest is a Municipal Light Plan Telecommunications Cooperative made up of 27 member towns in western Massachusetts whose mission is to – as expeditiously and prudently as possible – plan and operate a community-owned, fiber-optic network that enables the provision of comprehensive, affordable, reliable and high-quality internet, phone, video and ancillary services to all residents, businesses and institutions who are interested, in participating WiredWest towns.

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