

# **MASSACHUSETTS WINS \$2 MILLION IN FEDERAL STIMULUS FUNDING FOR BROADBAND DATA DEVELOPMENT & MAPPING**

BOSTON - Friday, November 06, 2009 - Governor Deval Patrick today announced that Massachusetts has won approximately \$2 million in federal stimulus funding to aid in the development of affordable, reliable broadband Internet services for all communities in the Commonwealth. On Wednesday, the Governor met with U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke in Washington, D.C. to push for the state's broadband priorities, noting that expanding access to high-speed Internet will create jobs, support business expansion and help students and businesses compete in a 21<sup>st</sup> global economy.

The funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) for the collection and mapping of broadband availability and infrastructure information will lead to the creation of a comprehensive, statewide database of broadband availability and an updated state map of broadband coverage. This project will help the state prepare for additional federal funding to build new broadband infrastructure that will bring high-speed Internet, or broadband, access to tens of thousands of households, businesses and community anchor institutions throughout the Commonwealth - including the unserved and underserved communities of western Massachusetts and the Cape.

"We are grateful to the Obama Administration and our Congressional delegation for this investment that moves us another step closer to bringing broadband access to all businesses, schools and communities in the Commonwealth," said Governor Patrick. "Broadband access is an essential element of economic success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and we look forward to putting these funds to work immediately."

Governor Patrick has designated the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI), a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, to lead the state's efforts to increase broadband deployment. In August 2009, the state applied for more than \$100 million in federal stimulus funding, which was divided into two proposals focused on mapping and infrastructure development in western Massachusetts. Federal funding awards for broadband infrastructure deployment are expected to be announced on a rolling basis beginning mid-December 2009 through February 2010, and will be followed by one additional funding round.

"Too many Massachusetts communities are underserved when it comes to broadband access and some, such as Wendell and Monterey in western Massachusetts, have no access at all. Communities on one side of the state should be able to benefit from broadband the same way as communities on the other side of the state, and that's why my colleagues in Congress and I have pushed so hard for this funding. I'm grateful to the Commerce Department for helping us to continue deploying broadband to as many people as quickly as possible," said Senator John Kerry.

"Guaranteeing affordable, dependable broadband throughout the Commonwealth is a question of basic fairness," said Senator Paul G. Kirk, Jr. "Access to high-speed Internet is an absolute necessity for educational and business development in today's global marketplace. This grant is a good first step to enable families, schools and businesses in communities throughout the state to gain access to the high-speed broadband they need."

"Success in the fiercely competitive global economy depends on our overarching telecommunications policy goals, including a competitive, high speed broadband infrastructure," said Congressman Ed Markey. "A broadband network will spur new growth, investment, choice and greater affordability in cutting-edge broadband applications, services and technologies. As the author of the Recovery Act provision funding the expansion of broadband deployment, I am pleased that Massachusetts will get federal funds to help our state plan for the deployment of new broadband infrastructure that will expand broadband access to households and businesses in unserved and underserved communities."

The NTIA has awarded the MBI over \$1.5 million to collect and verify the availability, speed and location of broadband across the Commonwealth. This activity is to be conducted on a semi-annual basis between 2009 and 2011, with the data to be presented in a clear and accessible format to the public, government and the research community. In addition, WesternMA Connect, Inc., the combined entity of formerly Berkshire Connect, Inc. and Pioneer Valley Connect, will receive \$500,000 for the cost of broadband planning activities in Massachusetts over two years, bringing the Commonwealth's mapping grant award total to approximately \$2 million.

In May 2009, Governor Patrick unveiled a new interactive mapping tool using Google mapping technology that enables users to pinpoint the locations of their homes, businesses or schools on a map and to enter their current mode of access to the Internet. Working with the Massachusetts Office of Geographic and Environmental Information (MassGIS), the MBI has a head start on mapping broadband access across the state.

The Massachusetts Broadband Data Mapping Project will accomplish the following:

- develop a database of broadband availability and capability at the county, community and street level;
- put in place the tools, partnerships, and processes to keep the database current and accurate;
- make the public portions of the database easily accessible by the citizens, businesses and agencies throughout the state, while maintaining the security and integrity of the data;
- utilize stringent protocols and processes consistent with all state and federal legal requirements to protect confidential data; and
- provide regular updates of the data to the NTIA for inclusion in a nationwide database.

The MBI proposes to build broadband fiber infrastructure that will provide citizens of all unserved and underserved communities of western Massachusetts with high-speed Internet access. Specifically, the MBI plans to build a fiber "middle mile" network throughout the western region of the state that, in addition

to bringing broadband access to these communities, would provide direct connection to regional anchor institutions ( e.g., schools, libraries, hospitals and other facilities) and other critical community facilities. The project could create as many as 3,040 jobs and would be in partnership with other state and local government entities, non-profits and for-profit companies.

The fiber-optic network would build on a recently announced \$4.3 million, 55-mile segment of MBI fiber currently being deployed along the Interstate 91 corridor in western Massachusetts. This partnership with MassDOT constitutes a "match" from Massachusetts towards the federal funding proposal.

Studies indicate that communities with broadband access experience increases in jobs, business expansion and property values. Other broadband-enabled benefits include improvements in public safety and access to health care, educational opportunities and civic participation.

For more information, please visit [www.massbroadband.org](http://www.massbroadband.org).