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### **Patrick files broadband access bill**

By Matt Murphy, Eagle Boston Bureau

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BOSTON — Gov. Deval L. Patrick filed a \$25 million bond bill yesterday in hopes of expanding high-speed Internet access to unserved cities and towns.

The borrowed money would be used to invest in publicly owned broadband infrastructure and to partner with private firms to fully wire the 32 communities without high-speed access by 2010.

Almost all of those unserved cities and towns are in Western Massachusetts, in Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden counties. The lack of high-speed access can hamper small businesses' ability to compete, as well as limiting schools' opportunity to use the Internet as a teaching tool, experts say.

"This is a great opportunity for the state to empower and cultivate existing talent. Particularly for areas like Western Massachusetts, this initiative begins to level the playing field for local students, residents and businesses by opening the door to an enormous amount of information and resources," said state Rep. Daniel E. Bosley, D-North Adams.

The governor's bill would create the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, that would administer a new incentive fund for infrastructure expansion.

"Today's global economy requires that every corner of our commonwealth be wired for the 21st century," Patrick said.