



Berkshire Connect, Inc.



January 11, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Regional Broadband Survey Distributed

Broadband matters in Western Massachusetts! Access to broadband (high speed internet) is an absolute necessity. If Western Massachusetts wants to spur economic development, increase quality educational opportunities, and enhance emergency communication, broadband is essential. Currently, one-third of the 101 municipalities in Western Massachusetts have no access to basic broadband technology, such as Digital Subscriber Lines (DSL) or cable modem broadband. Many other communities in the region only have broadband access in limited areas. Now is the time for residents and business owners located in these communities to be heard!

Berkshire Connect and Pioneer Valley Connect (the Connects), two regional organizations known as the Connects, are devoted to creating a robust telecommunications landscape that offers affordable and reliable broadband services throughout Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden Counties. They are working with legislators, local broadband groups, regional partners, state agencies and the Governor's Administration to bring broadband services to our underserved region. In anticipation of the passing of Governor Patrick's \$25 million bill targeted to bring broadband infrastructure to the unserved communities of the Commonwealth, a Regional Broadband Survey has been developed to gather information that will assist the Connects in more accurately defining the unserved areas of our region and determining current broadband market potential.

The Regional Broadband Survey will take less than five minutes to complete and all responses are completely confidential. Downloadable and online electronic versions are available at: www.pioneervalleyconnect.org or www.bconnect.org. The Connects have contacted individual communities to encourage them to insert the survey in their town newsletters or census mailings, or make them available for pick up locally. Organizations, such as regional planning agencies, chambers of commerce and other groups, have supported this effort by referencing this survey on their websites and in their newsletters. Copies of the survey can also be obtained from your local broadband committee or by calling Sharon Ferry of Berkshire Connect at 413-496-9606. Submit only one survey per household and/or one survey per business address. Please complete the survey by March 1, 2008. Respondents are also welcome to submit the completed surveys at the Broadband Forum for Western Massachusetts event to be held on Saturday, March 1, 2008 from 8:30 am – 3:00 pm at the Clarion Hotel & Conference Center in Northampton, MA. There is no charge for attendance. To register for the Forum, send contact information to burnes@masstech.org

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Support for the Connects Regional Broadband Survey is provided by a Regional Priority Grant award from the John Adams Innovation Institute. The Innovation Institute, a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, supports technology-based economic development initiatives in the Commonwealth.