



BERKSHIRE CONNECT, INC.



March 30, 2007

Connects Beta Test Program Semi-Finalists Announced

Due to the number of excellent applications the Connects received, the semi-finalist selection process for the Connects Beta Test Program was very competitive. Seventeen applications from fifteen communities were submitted. However, given the finite amount of resources available to conduct the Beta Test Program, the Connects had to limit the number of applicants to be selected as semi-finalists. The Project Team carefully reviewed the minimum criteria and other preferred factors in each application, and weighed how the application would fit into the goals of the Beta Test Program. The Connects sincerely thank all applicants for their interest in the Beta Test Program, and the time and effort undertaken to complete the application.

The list of test areas selected as semi-finalists is (in alphabetical order by Town):

- Gabriel Abbott School Area, Florida
- North Leverett/Moore's Corner Area, Leverett
- Leyden Center, Leyden
- Town Center, New Ashford
- New Salem Center, New Salem
- Village Center, Plainfield
- Town Center, Tyringham
- Town Center, Warwick
- Worthington Village, Worthington

During the month of April, Connects staff and consultants will complete the due diligence needed to select the finalists for inclusion in the Beta Test Program. Part of this selection process will be to determine the feasibility of creating a wireless broadband network in the test area proposed, and how this test area's participation in the Program could be used as a model for other un-served areas in the region. The Connects will announce the proposed areas selected as finalists for inclusion in the Beta Test Program on April 30, 2007.

After the finalists have been selected, the Connects will work with the participating communities to build a wireless broadband network and monitor it over the course of a year. Periodic Beta Test Program updates will be posted online for the benefit of other communities. In particular, the Connects hope to utilize lessons learned during the implementation of these networks to provide technical assistance to support the development of wireless networks in other un-served and underserved communities. In addition, the results of the Beta Test Program networks will be incorporated into the Underserved Communities Project, an effort to build a sustainable, robust broadband network throughout Western Massachusetts.

For more information about the Connects Beta Test Program, please contact Maggie Bergin, Project Manager for the Underserved Communities Project, at (509) 998-5930 or maggieanne@mac.com.