

For immediate release:

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MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES AGREEMENT WITH LIGHTOWER FIBER NETWORKS TO ADVANCE *MASSBROADBAND 123* NETWORK

Westborough- January 4, 2012 - In keeping with the Patrick-Murray Administration's commitment to expanding broadband access in western Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) today announced an important agreement with Lightower Fiber Networks to provide long-term access to fiber-optic cable that will connect the *MassBroadband 123* network to the major Internet connection point in Boston. This is one of the critical components necessary to link the more than 1,000-mile network to the Internet and expand broadband services to communities in western and north central Massachusetts.

"Our Administration is committed to bringing affordable and reliable broadband access to residents and businesses across the Commonwealth," said Governor Deval Patrick. "By expanding broadband infrastructure and forming new public-private partnerships, we will enhance our economic vitality and drive job growth for Massachusetts residents."

"The expansion of broadband connectivity is an important part of the Patrick-Murray Administration's initiative to support job creation and spur economic growth across the Commonwealth," said Housing and Economic Development Secretary Greg Bialecki. "By working with our partners in industry and government, we are leveraging existing resources to extend broadband connectivity and create new economic opportunities for Massachusetts residents."

Lightower, which has headquarters in Boxborough, was selected through an open, rigorous and highly competitive procurement process. The MBI will lease fiber on two diverse existing paths of the Lightower network to connect the *MassBroadband 123* network with a major New England Internet access point in Boston. The redundancy of pathways is critical to ensure that the *MassBroadband 123* network remains operational and efficient during a storm or any other event that could impact the operability of the network. These connections will also provide a

more affordable option for service providers in the western part of the state to carry Internet traffic to Boston.

“Extending broadband access will strengthen the state’s innovation economy and enhance our competitiveness,” said Pamela Goldberg, CEO of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative. “The MBI is building a sustainable fiber-optic network that will attract private investment and position the Commonwealth for future economic success.”

“The MBI is bringing quality, affordable broadband access that will ensure that residents, businesses and community institutions have the tools they need to compete and thrive in the 21st century economy,” said MBI Director Judy Dumont. “Today’s agreement is another great example of how government and businesses can work together to close the digital divide and connect the unconnected.”

“As a high tech company headquartered in Massachusetts, Lightower is honored to provide one of the fundamental components of the *MassBroadband 123* network,” stated Rob Shanahan, CEO of Lightower. “We are committed to supporting the vision of Governor Patrick and his administration of expanding broadband services to communities in western and north central Massachusetts and in furthering technological advances across the state. By leveraging Lightower’s diverse fiber-optic network assets, *MassBroadband 123* benefits from connecting western and north central Massachusetts to all corners of the Commonwealth and the major Internet connection points in Boston.”

MassBroadband 123 will expand high-speed Internet to over 120 communities in western and north central Massachusetts. The future-proof fiber-optic backbone will provide the necessary infrastructure to bring innovative broadband technology to residents and businesses in the region. To expand high-speed Internet access, the MBI is attaching fiber-optic cable to over 30,000 existing utility poles in the project’s service area.

The MBI is a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative (MTC), a public economic development agency charged with strengthening the innovation economy and supporting technology-related enterprises throughout the Commonwealth. MTC will own the *MassBroadband 123* network and is responsible for its design and construction, which is expected to be completed by summer 2013.

About the MBI

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) is working to extend affordable high-speed Internet access to all homes, businesses, schools, libraries, medical facilities, government offices and other public places across the Commonwealth. Governor Patrick created the Massachusetts Broadband Institute, a division of the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, when he signed the Broadband Act into law in August 2008. The Act gives the MBI the authority to invest up to \$40 million of state bond funds in necessary and long-lived infrastructure assets, such as conduits, fiber-optic cable and wireless towers.

www.massbroadband.org

About Lightower Fiber Networks

Lightower Fiber Networks, a metro fiber and bandwidth provider in the Northeast, offers an all-fiber network of over 6,400 route miles coupled with comprehensive transport, alternative access, and nationwide long haul services. Lightower offers a complete suite of end-to-end fiber networking solutions including Ethernet, wavelengths, Internet access, SONET, collocation, video transport, and wireless backhaul. Lightower's fiber footprint extends from New England, to eastern New York State, New Jersey, Long Island, and New York City. With access to over 2,800 buildings, Lightower offers regional density, performance, scalability, security, and reliability in the Northeast. Lightower Fiber is headquartered in Boxborough, MA. For more information, visit www.lightower.com or call 888-LT-FIBER.