Five Colleges, Incorporated

Amherst College · Hampshire College · Mount Holyoke College · Smith College · University of Massachusetts Amherst

To: MASSACHUSETTS BROADBAND INSTITUTE

From: Lorna M. Peterson, Manager
FIVE COLLEGE NET, LLC

Date: December 17, 2008

Subject: Five College Net, LLC: A "Solution"

In 2002, the member institutions of Five Colleges, Incorporated – Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke and Smith Colleges, and the University of Massachusetts Amherst – began exploring avenues for increasing at reasonable cost their connectivity to each other and to Internet2. Given the costs of leasing enough copper circuits to respond to the ever growing demand and the lack of interest among commercial providers to invest in rural areas, the Five Colleges came to the conclusion that the most reasonable solution was to build its own network.

Five College Net, LLC is a 53-mile network the footprint of which forms a loop around the five campuses and extends down to One Federal Street in Springfield to a carrier neutral facility. Those 53 miles go through seven towns and municipalities; each of these has been offered four strands of dark fiber and, to date, three of the towns – Amherst, Chicopee, and South Hadley – have connected to the Network. Five College Net has given the communities within its footprint the much-needed solution to connectivity by providing an infrastructure that will enhance the entire local area's economic and educational development capacity.

Five College Net can also be a solution for the wider western Massachusetts region by offering to lease dark fiber to interested parties, thus expanding the footprint of the network beyond the current area into the wider region.

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