

PRESS RELEASE FOR THE 'BOARD OF HEALTH INTERNET PROJECT'

HIGH SPEED INTERNET PROJECT BRINGS ACCESS TO SELECT WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS TOWN HALLS

The four local Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coalitions in western Massachusetts have received funding from the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) to purchase high speed internet access for Board of Health offices located in areas without access to cable television broadband or Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) service. In western Massachusetts, 29 Town Halls were identified as being underserved in terms of telecommunications by having no access to cable broadband or DSL. As such, these communities were eligible for help in getting local boards of health online.

The purpose of this Board of Health Internet Project is so that all local Boards of Health will have better access to the resources needed to complete their jobs, such as having access to on-line codes, reporting, and emergency alert systems. This opportunity was pursued by a collaboration of western Massachusetts Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coalitions, specifically: the Mohawk Area Public Health Coalition serving Franklin County, the Berkshire County Boards of Health Association, the Hampshire County Board of Health Coalition, and the Hampden County Board of Health Coalition. A Request for Proposal (RFP) was implemented by the Franklin Regional Council of Governments and Pioneer Valley Connect, under the guidance of these Coalitions. The RFP segmented western Massachusetts into three subregions. Upon review of five proposals submitted for consideration, a vendor was chosen to provide T1 internet services to the Boards of Health at town halls located in each subregion.

The awards were made to the following vendors:

- Crocker Communications was selected to serve the Pioneer Valley's 413 Area Code Subregion, which includes the following 17 Town Hall locations: Colrain, Goshen, Hawley, Heath, Leverett, Leyden, Monroe, Rowe, Blandford, Montgomery, Tolland, Cummington, Middlefield, Peru, Plainfield, Windsor, and Worthington.
- The partnership of CTC Communications/Lightship/Cinetel Solutions was selected for the Pioneer Valley's 978 Area Code Subregion, which includes the following 3 Town Hall locations: New Salem, Warwick and Wendell.
- The partnership of CTC Communications/Lightship/Cinetel Solutions was selected for the Berkshire County's 413 Area Subregion, which includes the following 9 Town Hall locations: Alford, Florida, Monterey, Mt. Washington, New Ashford, New Marlborough (Mill River), Sandisfield, Tyringham and Washington.

The DPH grant will fund these T1 services for a period of one year. After the one year term has finished, the municipality or Board of Health may choose to continue the service by paying for it themselves, or may choose to cancel the service. During this one year period, efforts will be pursued to try to find ways to help the participating towns continue these services.

Contact Information

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Vendor Web Links

Crocker Communications: www.crocker.com

Cinetel Solutions: www.cinetel.biz

Lightship Communications: www.lightship.com