

# The Berkshire Eagle

## Wiring the Berkshires

*Editorial*

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The welcome decision by Verizon Communications to introduce DSL Internet service to seven Berkshire County communities means that the company has decided there is enough money to be made to make

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the service profitable. The decision doesn't effect Governor Patrick's proposed creation of a \$25 million broadband incentive fund, and in fact, the plan almost certainly showed Verizon that expansion is worth pursuing given the likelihood of state involvement.

Along with introducing phone line Internet service to seven sparsely populated rural communities, Becket, Florida, Hancock, New Ashford, New Marlborough, Sandisfield and Windsor, Verizon will be upgrading its current service in Otis, Stockbridge and West Stockbridge. This is part of a \$200 million upgrade by Verizon that features the introduction of fiber-optic service to 30 communities in eastern Massachusetts, where the telecommunications company makes most of its money in the state.

Verizon obviously wants a substantial chunk of the broadband incentive money, should it make it through the Legislature in tact, and more power to the company. Government money that shakes loose private money is money extremely well spent. This is also a beginning, not an end, as there will still be some small Berkshire communities without DSL, and the day will come when those Berkshire communities to be served by DSL will want to move up to fiber-

optic, which is faster and carries much more information.

As beginnings go, it is an impressive one. Government and businesses in the Berkshires will be able to operate more efficiently, and second-home owner towns will be able to draw small businesses, as state Representative Denis Guyer, a member of a Berkshire legislative delegation that has worked hard to bring in broadband service, observed. Berkshire County will never have a good road network, but the Berkshires' many attractive rural communities can enjoy the right kind of small, low-impact growth if the county can build a good broadband network. Verizon's decision is a major step in that direction.

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