

Director's Corner

As we celebrate the holidays, the MBI is grateful for the support and partnership of so many over the past year. In 2014, we completed construction of *MassBroadband 123*; directly connected over 400 Western Massachusetts community facilities to high-speed Internet; advocated for a \$50 Million capital appropriation for residential and business connectivity; and launched a detailed, collaborative regional Last Mile planning strategy.



Philip F. Holahan
Interim Director

Without the insight, advocacy, partnership, feedback, and support of our partners, none of this would be possible.

We have benefited from an engaged Board of Directors, strong community advocacy from residents and groups like WiredWest, municipal organizations such as the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), a robust group of service providers, visionary legislative leadership, and active municipal leaders and associations.

One of our very best partners from day one has been Governor Deval Patrick and the leaders that compose his Administration. As the Patrick Administration moves into its final days, the MBI is profoundly grateful for the commitment that Governor Patrick and his team demonstrated to broadband expansion. Their commitment to state capital investment helped position the MBI to capture significant federal funding, allowing for the construction of *MassBroadband 123*. And, their partnership and support in developing and investing in a Last Mile strategy will put Massachusetts at the national forefront of tackling the rural broadband challenge.

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MBI News

We are delighted to report that the MBI Board has voted to appoint Eric Nakajima as the next Director of the Massachusetts Broadband Institute at MasTech.

As the Commonwealth's Assistant Secretary for Innovation Policy, Eric has been directly involved with shaping the MBI's strategy for the past several years. He has been a partner to the MBI and our stakeholders, and has had many diverse experiences working to develop and execute community-based economic growth initiatives, including development of the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center in Holyoke. Eric will bring a deep understanding of the strategic challenges ahead and the capacity to successfully lead the MBI team as our mission turns towards network operation and last mile strategy in 2015 and beyond.

An Amherst native, Eric is a graduate of UMass-Amherst and has a Masters in Planning from the University of California-Berkley.

We look forward to Eric's arrival at MasTech. Interim Director Phil Holahan will officially transition the division's leadership to Eric on January 20, 2015.

MBI Helps Small Businesses Use Technology to Compete and Thrive in the Modern Marketplace

In 2012, the MBI rolled out a program with the state's Community Development Corporations (CDC) to select over 30 businesses to participate in a Small Business Technical Assistance Grant Program. The program's goal was to support pathways to increased economic competitiveness through the use of technology.

Through the program, four CDC's around the Commonwealth partnered with the MBI to assist small businesses that lacked sufficient resources, helping them use technology to improve their operations, grow their business, and thrive in a competitive marketplace.

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Illusions Academy of Dance, New Bedford, MA

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These investments will have a permanent impact on long-term economic sustainability and opportunity in Western Massachusetts. On behalf of all the current and future residents, businesses, municipal facilities, health care, education, and public safety institutions who will see this benefit, we are very grateful for Governor Patrick's support throughout his tenure and wish him all the best for the future.

Wishing you very happy holidays,

-Phil

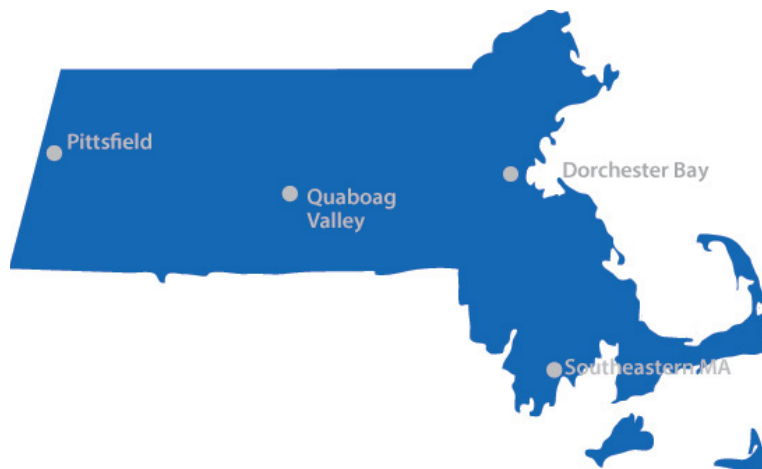


Governor Patrick signs the Broadband Bill in 2008, Goshen, MA.

MBI Helps Small Businesses Use Technology to Compete and Thrive in the Modern Marketplace (continued from page 1)

Through a competitive selection process, \$600,000 was awarded to four CDC's across the Commonwealth - Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corporation, the Pittsfield Economic Revitalization Corporation, the Community Economic Development Corporation of Southeastern Massachusetts and the Quaboag Valley Community Development Corporation.

Each CDC received \$150,000 to provide technical assistance and resources for small businesses and non-profit organization within their respective region.



Small Business Technical Assistance: 4 regional CDCs provided grants that allowed 46 small businesses and nonprofits to incorporate computer and internet technology.

As this statewide program wraps up, we are delighted to report that the program was successful, met its goals, and had a positive impact on the regions it supported. CDC's were able to help local organizations create technology plans, procure and install computer hardware and software, provision Internet service, create and update websites and social media, and train and support business staff.

Here are a few examples of supported organizations:



Klara's Gourmet Cookies, Lee, MA

A family owned gourmet cookie bakery used their award to add e-commerce to their website. In the first month the new website was launched, an order was placed online from a prominent Boston law firm for over \$10,000 worth of gift baskets.

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Balickis's Auto Body, Wareham, MA

An auto repair, salvage and parts business used their grant to automate their parts inventory and create an online store. They expanded their business beyond their local area and now ship parts, particularly for older collectible vehicles, throughout the United States. The business is increasing its customers, sales and revenue, helping turn around a business that had been in a slow decline.

China Array Plastics, Pittsfield, MA

A plastics manufacturer that designs and manufactures high-performance, high-value plastic components for aerospace, medical and electronic industries used its grant to expand its broadband service, upgrade its design tools to more easily and quickly send designs, technical drawings (CADD) and specifications to customers and overseas manufacturing facilities, and to conduct online virtual meetings. Previously the company had to travel frequently overseas for meetings and send design and CADD files via DVD, which sometimes took weeks to ship. Their award resulted in time saved, reduced costs, a shortened production cycle and quicker delivery to customers.



Illusions Academy of Dance, New Bedford, MA

A dance studio and school implemented class registration and management software, that allows students to register and pay for classes online, and the business owner to more easily schedule and manage classes. Students appreciate the convenience, and staff are now able to concentrate more efforts on teaching, and less time on administration. The owner stated, "This has been the best thing ever for my studio!"

Tremendous Maids, Boston (Jamaica Plain), MA

A residential and commercial cleaning company that used its award to create a new website and install a web-based scheduling and payment system for customers. The new system reduced the number of scheduling issues and conflicts, and made it easier for customers to schedule services. The business has since expanded and has hired several new employees.



The Record Company, Boston (Dorchester), MA

A recording studio that employs interns from a local music college and targets classes to at-risk youth used its award to update its computer equipment and software, and to implement a web-based scheduling and payment system to make it simpler for students to enroll in classes, reducing administrative work. The award allowed the studio to reduce overall administrative work, making it easier for them to manage classes and focus more time on teaching up-to-date techniques using the latest technology.

These grantees demonstrated the positive impact that technology infrastructure and training can have on all sectors of our economy. The MBI has been delighted to support this program and congratulates all participants on their success!