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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Robert J. Bauman
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Milwaukee Poised To Become First Big City To Go Wireless

Special Friday Meeting Called To Approve Agreement with Midwest Fiber

Milwaukee Ald. Robert J. Bauman, chair of the Common Council's Public Works Committee, says preliminary negotiations have been completed with the firm that wants to build a wireless computer network in Milwaukee, and the committee will hold a special meeting on **Friday, January 13, 2006**, to consider the proposed Facilities and License Agreement with Midwest Fiber Networks of Milwaukee.

The Public Works Committee will meet tomorrow at 10 a.m. in Room 301-B of Milwaukee City Hall to discuss the details of the proposed agreement. Media coverage is encouraged.

Under the original proposal, Midwest Fiber Networks offered to own, operate and upgrade the network at its own cost, and recoup its estimated \$20 million investment by leasing its network to other companies, including Internet service providers, for a fee. The city would not sell the service. It would allow the firm to lease space in the city-owned underground conduits or to place Wi-Fi antennas on city property such as buildings or streetlights.

(More)

Wireless Network/ADD ONE

Ald. Bauman says the council will have to decide if its goal is to maximize revenue from the project or maximize the benefit to the community. In addition to considering what kind of compensation the city would get, many officials have called for the proposal to include a fund to help low-income people get free access to the Internet at various locations in the city such as parks, public housing facilities or schools.

According to the original proposal, the deal with Midwest Fiber Networks would not be exclusive, meaning other companies could also propose their own systems and seek a lease with the city.

Dozens of cities nationwide have started or are considering citywide wireless networks. If the plan is approved, Milwaukee could become the first big city to implement such a system.