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September 8, 2006

Ald. Michael J. Murphy  
(414) 286-2074

## City Will Court Other Wi-Fi Providers

*Ald. Murphy Announces End to Exclusive Agreement with Midwest Fiber*

The City of Milwaukee's proposed contract with Midwest Fiber Networks to construct a wireless Internet service citywide had granted the company the **exclusive rights** to be the first firm to build the Wi-Fi service in any given area of the city. **But no longer.**

In June, Ald. Michael J. Murphy sponsored a resolution that was passed by the Common Council, inviting and authorizing other companies to negotiate a contract to provide Wi-Fi service. Today he announced that on Thursday (Sept. 7), the city removed the exclusivity language from the contract with Midwest Fiber, a contract that has still not been finalized.

When the Common Council first approved the Midwest Fiber plan in January, officials thought the near west side would have service this summer with the rest of the city completed by mid 2007. "Despite the best efforts of city officials, the city has yet to finalize a contract to build the system," said Ald. Murphy. "I greatly applaud this change in Midwest Fiber's contract language, and believe that the City of Milwaukee will achieve the best possible result through open, non-preferential treatment of any and all interested companies."

Ald. Murphy said negotiations on a contract with Earthlink have already begun, and he expects others to follow. "The change in language should greatly encourage other companies to bring forth contract proposals without the fear that they will be made to wait to deploy their wireless systems," he said.

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Wireless Network/ADD ONE

Ald. Murphy said allowing other companies to compete on an even footing will give the citizens of Milwaukee competition, which in turn should provide both the best possible contract and the lowest possible price to the consumer.

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.

“Milwaukee is still poised to be among the first cities in the nation to deploy this technology,” said Ald Murphy. “I look forward to working with all interested parties and to completing contracts with any or all of them in the near future, and will continue to work to see that this comes to pass.”