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MMWEC, Municipal Utilities Awarded Energy Efficient Street Lighting Grant

LUDLOW, Mass. -- December 14, 2016 -- Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) has received a \$2.9 million grant under the state Department of Energy Resources' LED Street Lighting Accelerator Program on behalf of 16 member municipal light departments. The grant will help pay for the cost of new energy efficient LED street light fixtures, long-life photo-electric controllers and wireless controllers for the fixtures.

The grant is part of \$11.4 million in LED Street Lighting Accelerator Program funding awarded this week by the Baker-Polito Administration to more than 30 communities. The participating MMWEC member municipal light departments are located in Boylston, Chicopee, Holden, Holyoke, Hull, Ipswich, Mansfield, Marblehead, Paxton, Peabody, Princeton, Shrewsbury, South Hadley, Templeton, Wakefield and West Boylston.

MMWEC plans to use the grant to purchase up to 22,000 street light fixtures and up to 9,000 controllers. The grant covers 50 percent of the costs of the fixtures and controllers, with the remaining 50 percent paid for by the individual light departments.

While final fixtures have not been selected, the estimated yearly energy cost savings to all participating systems is \$816,000, based upon an estimated yearly energy savings of 631,318,000 kilowatt hours.

"MMWEC is pleased to administer and serve as purchasing agent/agggregator for the participating municipal light departments to replace older street light fixtures with more efficient ones," said MMWEC CEO Ronald C. DeCurzio. "This effort is yet another way municipal light plants are working to reduce the electricity loads in their communities."

MMWEC notified its members earlier this year of this opportunity and began researching the grant requirements. MMWEC has met regularly with Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) officials to keep informed about this and other grant opportunities as well as emerging technology developments at the state level.

The primary requirements of the grant are that a cobra head-style roadway light fixture, which refers to the fixture's shape, be used and that the fixture must have a seven-pin receptacle. The seven-pin receptacle, when utilized with an advanced wireless controller, offers features such as system monitoring, two-way communications, metering from a remote location, setting programmable operation schedules for lights, and integrating other "smart cities" technology to lights, such as mounted cameras and weather monitoring.

The fixtures carry a ten-year warranty, with a predicted life expectancy of up to 20 years. The controllers carry a 15-20-year warranty. These LED fixtures are 40-55% more efficient than the fixtures they are replacing.

MMWEC is seeking bids from vendors for the project. Proposals will be accepted by MMWEC until 2 p.m. on Thursday, January 12, 2017, when the bids will be opened.

MMWEC is the joint action agency for public power in Massachusetts, providing a variety of power supply, financial, risk management and other services to the state's consumer-owned, municipal utilities. MMWEC was created in 1969 and became a non-profit, public corporation and political subdivision of the Commonwealth in 1976, empowered to issue tax-exempt bonds to finance energy facilities for the benefit of municipal utilities and their customers.