

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

Contact: Susan Houston, Executive Director, MassEcon  
(781) 489-6262 x 11, shouston@massecon.com  
Contact: Allan Blair, President & CEO, EDC Western Massachusetts  
(413) 593-6421, a.blair@westernmassedc.com

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROUPS TRAVEL TO SAN FRANCISCO IN AN EFFORT TO RECRUIT PHOTONICS COMPANIES TO WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS**

*Building an Industry Cluster in Western Massachusetts*

**Wellesley & Springfield, Massachusetts, January 24, 2011** - Business recruitment representatives from MassEcon, the Economic Development Council of Western Massachusetts, and Western Massachusetts Electric Company (Northeast Utilities) will be in San Francisco during the week of January 24 to meet with photonics companies attending SPIE Photonics West trade show and conference at the Moscone Center. The business recruitment team has 15-20 appointments with growth companies that have an interest in learning about the Commonwealth's assets, and in particular, those of Western Massachusetts.

In addition to meeting with photonics companies, the team will meet with several Bay Area site location consultants to describe Massachusetts's resources including workforce, universities, and research facilities. MassEcon will also highlight the Commonwealth's *MarketReady* properties, showing that Massachusetts has a ready inventory of properties to meet companies' needs. Susan Houston, Executive Director of MassEcon said, "Correcting misconceptions about the Commonwealth while showing off our site-readiness and ability to support business growth will mean new job opportunities for the state."

The Western Massachusetts region is home to a growing cluster of companies developing photonics technologies including Kollmorgen, Prima North America, Hoppe Technologies, Takos Trading Company, Biolitec, and Instrument Technology. Photonics is an enabling technology that supports a variety of industries including life sciences, medical devices, defense and aerospace, information technology, and energy. Significant research in the field is occurring at the Boston University Photonics Center, which boasts several state-of-the-art research laboratories and is currently home to 14 start-up companies. Allan W. Blair, President and CEO of the Western Mass EDC, said that, "Our region is globally competitive in the photonics, laser and optics industry with the facilities, talent, workforce, research and training required for successful companies to compete."

"The Patrick-Murray Administration has made supporting innovation a key component of its economic development strategy. The work of our partners at MassEcon and Western Mass EDC has allowed us to engage companies that are interested in locating here precisely because of the talent and resources we've helped to grow here in the Commonwealth," said Greg Bialecki, the Commonwealth's Secretary of Housing and Economic Development.

**About MassEcon**

MassEcon is a private, non-profit corporation dedicated to marketing Massachusetts as a competitive location for business. Founded in 1993 and working with state, local, and regional partners, MassEcon's services include the only statewide *Site Finder Service*, which helps expanding companies find appropriate sites throughout the Commonwealth; the *Research & Information Service*, which provides companies with the information they need to evaluate the Commonwealth as a location to grow; and the *Massachusetts Ambassadors*, a network of civic and corporate leaders who help promote Massachusetts as a business location. [www.massecon.com](http://www.massecon.com)

**About Western Mass Economic Development Council**

The EDC is a private, non-profit corporation that is leading the region's economic development by helping businesses to expand, relocate and succeed in Western Massachusetts. Its mission is to deliver the services and business resources that will enable companies to thrive in Western Massachusetts while improving the region's economy and lifestyle through the creation of quality jobs and enhanced public and private investment. [www.WesternMassEDC.com](http://www.WesternMassEDC.com)