CEN MEMBER UPDATE

Connecticut Education Network

Self-Sufficient Funding Model

Since 2002, the CEN has been providing high-quality, high-speed bandwidth to schools, libraries, colleges, universities, state agencies, municipalities, and non-profits across the State of Connecticut.

The Governor's proposed FY 2017 budget requests CEN to become self-sufficient. This change represents a shift in funding models, as the state General Fund has covered the costs for public K – 12 schools and libraries since the Network's inception. This letter provides important information to all of our members regarding these changes.

Under the proposed budget for next year, CEN will begin billing schools and libraries for their use of the network starting in July 2016. Members that currently pay for access will see no immediate changes, and the network itself will remain substantially the same. In fact, guidelines governing federal funds used to expand the network in 2011 – 2013 require the network be maintained until at least 2024.

Connecting Our Students

CEN Member J.M. Wright Technical High School (Stamford)

"We have been with CEN for about five years now and not only has the service been phenomenal, but the price decreases each year have been wonderful. You have reduced the Mb/month rate by more then 50% just over the last year."
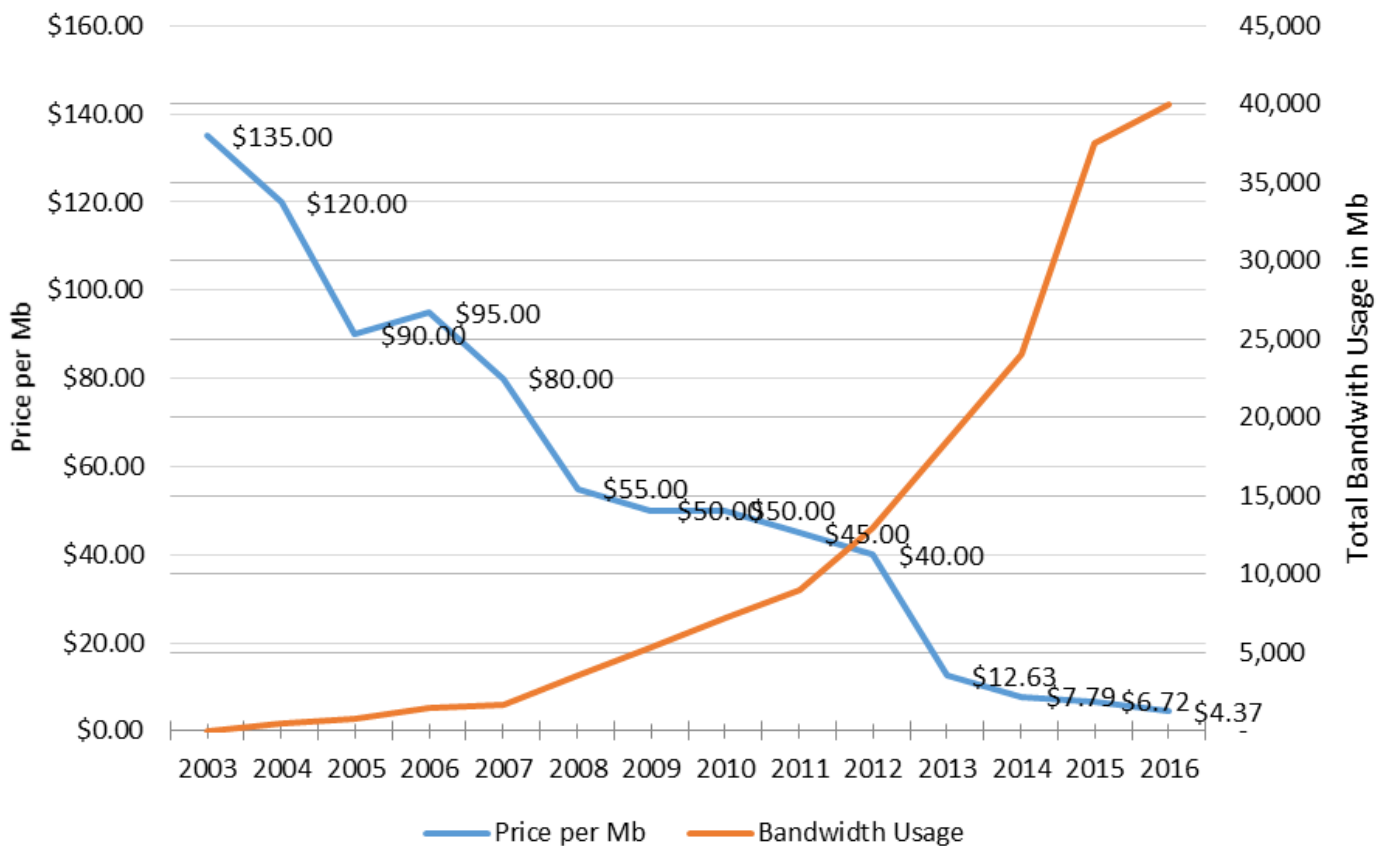
- D.J. Plante, Hopkins School

Member Considerations

The CEN provides savings for all of its members by aggregating operational costs, which result in volume service discounts. As a member, you may wish to research the services offered by other (commercial) providers. In doing so, please consider the following significant benefits that you currently appreciate through the CEN:

Scalability

The CEN remains uniquely positioned to meet the specific, growing demands of schools, libraries, towns, and research centers. In the last four years, public school use of the network has increased more than 500%, with 67% growth in the last year alone. With the advent of 1:1 computing, online testing, and digital textbooks, usage will only continue to increase. We at the CEN remain committed to meeting those needs while minimizing costs. Consider the following graph illustrating bandwidth usage to net cost:

CEN Member Suffield Academy

Considerations (Continued)

Cost Efficiencies

The cost of CEN network use has dropped substantially every year for the past ten years. Our members use more and pay the same or less than they did in prior years. If you enter into a multi-year contract with another provider, make sure you have their written assurance that bandwidth provision will increase to meet future needs with no cost hikes. Also consider the back-office, indirect cost to your staff to manage the RFPs, contracts, billing, and troubleshooting that the CEN team currently handles.

Content Filtering

CEN provides a consolidated content filtering capability that saves individual schools from procuring and maintaining this service. By leveraging a statewide agreement, CEN has created an extremely low-cost option to keep our students safe. If you consider other providers, make sure you include the costs for filtering, a federal mandate for K–12 schools.

Security and Stability

Cyber attacks such as distributed denial of service (DDoS) incidents have become more widespread and disruptive. Such attacks overwhelm your network and bring critical servers to a halt by sending massive amounts of data to them. Several Connecticut schools have been targets of these types of attacks, especially during online testing periods. In contrast to commercial providers, the CEN team provides at no additional cost a mitigation capability that stops these malicious attacks before they reach your school, town, or library, providing a more secure computing environment. Make sure any commercial provider you consider will also offer this service for free.

CEN Background and History

The CEN was established in 2000 with an important mission: ensure that students across the state have access to great technology and content on a network that will grow with them. Over the last 15 years, CEN has delivered on that promise. Through the use of federal broadband investments, state general funds, and customer payments, CEN has saved the state's schools and libraries more than $50 million, when compared with the cost of procuring broadband access through commercial providers.

In addition, the CEN has supported economic development by expanding the reach of broadband across the state. As we built the education network, fiber providers installed additional strands of fiber to all corners of the state. This investment has lowered the cost to bring access to all our citizens and is used extensively to serve wireless cell towers in the state. The map of our fiber reach footprint is found below.

Extraordinary Value

CEN provides the entire state the ability to grow our technology usage, investing in technologies that benefit the greater public good.

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services and products.

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CEN Statewide Fiber-Optic Map. Source: http://data.ct.gov