

**Media Release**

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## **High Speed Internet Access Reaches 18 Northeastern Ontario Communities**

Eighteen Northeastern Ontario communities now have access to high-speed Internet as a result of a nearly \$5.5 million investment in information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure in the region.

“In today’s economy, high speed access has become an essential tool for both individuals and companies and is important from economic, community, health care, education and business perspectives,” said Michel Desjardins, Chair of NEOnet (the Northeastern Ontario Communications Network), which spearheaded the project. “Doing business today requires access to superior ICT infrastructure and services. We thank Ontera for delivering on the construction and implementation of this essential infrastructure, as well as the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) and FedNor for their investment in our communities.”

“Expanding high-speed Internet and cellular services to these Northeastern Ontario communities will have significant, far-reaching benefits for thousands of residents, as well as for businesses in the region,” said Michael Gravelle, Minister of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry and Chair of the NOHFC. “With high-speed Internet, for example, residents will have better access to health and government services, and distance education opportunities.”

Since the end of February, Ontera, the telecommunications division of Ontario Northland, has been providing high-speed Internet access to the eighteen participating communities: Town of Latchford, North Milne, Temagami North, Goodfish Lake, Hough Lake, Chamberlain Township, Coleman Township, King Kirkland, Township of Gauthier, Gowganda, Nettie Lake, Foleyet, Chaput Hughes, Gogama, Seseikinika, Kenogami, Westree and Shining Tree.

“Access to high-speed Internet is no longer considered a luxury. Areas that remain without access to a reliable high-speed Internet connection are at a significant disadvantage,” said Paul Goulet, Acting President and CEO of Ontario Northland. “Thanks to this project, these 18 communities are now able to compete on a more even playing field with other regions across the country and throughout the world as broadband access reduces the barriers of distance, geography, and lack of services. Ontera is very proud to have contributed to such a significant social and economic development project.”

The Timiskaming and Gogama-Foleyet Area Broadband Project was based on stakeholder input. “Our mission is to equalize access to the health, education and social services that our urban counterparts take for granted, and offer our youth a viable alternative to leaving the North,” said Desjardins.

Ontera established a wireless broadband network using the Canopy Advantage system manufactured by Motorola Canada Ltd. This system provides a broadband, wireless, last-mile link to subscribers and is particularly well suited to servicing dispersed, low-density population bases such as the communities involved in the project. The system features a number of wireless points-of-presence (POPs) also referred to as access points (AP). AP clusters are located at tower sites in all 18 of the participating

communities. The wireless network is connected to Ontera's existing fibre optic back-haul network at Timmins, Kirkland Lake, Englehart, New Liskeard and Temagami. The project took just over two years to complete.

## User Testimonials

- *After waiting for what seemed an eternity, Hi-Speed internet finally made it to Gogama with the help of NEOnet and many others along the way. I was very glad to discard my dial-up connection and I'm more than satisfied with the new very fast system. I can now share many internet activities with family and friends which were heretofore unavailable to me because of speed restrictions. My thanks to all involved.*  
- Eldon Mantha, Gogama
- *Since high speed internet has become available in Gogama, it has greatly improved the communication capacity for my business. My business, JR Corner Store is comprised of five different business services within the same building. Most of my banking and product ordering can now be done much more efficiently and this contributes to savings of employee time and my product suppliers are also very pleased to be able to communicate with my business in a more timely fashion. Congratulations to the people that made this project happen, it's good for my business and my community.*  
- JR Corner Store, Jeannette & Rick Duguay, Gogama
- *Getting to where we are today took a long time, I think six or seven years from the time we embarked on the broadband project but was is worth it. Rest assured that it was the most gratifying moment to see this project come to fruition when we were finally able to leave dial up connections behind and move to high speed Internet. A project that saw many people get involved leading to a classic example of what partnerships can accomplish. Provincial and Federal government, community, private sector and non-profit organization coming together to accomplish what was best not only for my community but for the region and Northern Ontario. A special thank you to NEOnet for being the champion that never gave up on us and worked right along with us to make it happen. Thanks to Ontera for their involvement and wanting to be part of the solution and certainly a special thank you to the Federal and Provincial governments for their financial assistance. Today we enjoy internet that allows us to communicate with our friends and families, do on line banking in minutes instead of hours, tele-education and tele-health opportunities. Congratulations to all those that were involved with this project.*  
– Gerry Talbot, Gogama
- *I'm just letting you know that Shining Tree now has high speed. WOW! What a difference in speed. Thanks very much for all your assistance in bringing it to our community.*  
- Marilyn Groh, Shining Tree
- *Whoever was responsible or contributed to the possibility of high speed internet in the Shining Tree area we are greatly appreciative. It is like a Ferrari compared to a go-cart.*  
- Derek Mansell and Cathy Davis, Shining Tree

**NEOnet**

NEOnet, the Northeastern Ontario Communications Network, is a not-for-profit technology development organization working to improve telecommunications services and information and communications technology (ICT) adoption and application in Northeastern Ontario.

**Ontera**

Ontera, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Ontario Northland, is a fully integrated telecommunications company that offers a wide range of telecommunications and IP-based solutions including Internet, local, long distance, voice, data, and information technology services throughout Northern Ontario.

Ontario Northland, an Agency of the Province of Ontario, was established in 1902 and is a recognized leader in promoting sustainable economic growth by establishing and operating transportation and telecommunication links primarily in Northeastern Ontario. With more than 1,000 employees who live and work in the North, Ontario Northland, and the economic activity it stimulates, has a dramatic impact in the region.

**For more information please contact:**

Alexandra Spence, NEOnet, 705.360.1353 ext. 1; [aspence@neonet.on.ca](mailto:aspence@neonet.on.ca)

Beverly Martin, Ontario Northland, 705.472.4500 or 800.363.7512 ext. 265; cell: 705.845.8884;  
email: [Beverly.Martin@OntarioNorthland.ca](mailto:Beverly.Martin@OntarioNorthland.ca)