



February 7, 2020

DEVELOP NOVA SCOTIA--First Round of Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative Projects Announced

Nova Scotians deserve access to reliable, high-speed internet service, so they can live where they choose while staying connected and helping to grow our economy.

That is why government is making sure more Nova Scotians will have access to high-speed internet connections, with the announcement today, Feb. 7, of the first round of Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative projects.

Currently, about 70 per cent of homes and businesses have access to high speed internet. Today's announcement means 86 per cent of homes and businesses will have access to the service, close to the goal of achieving more than 95 per cent.

"This is great progress. A better-connected Nova Scotia is critical to our expanding economy and our quality of life. Today's Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative investments, and those to come, will ensure high-speed internet is available to as many homes and businesses as possible," said Premier Stephen McNeil.

Contracts with five internet service providers including Cross Country, in Canning, Kings Co., Mainland Telecom, in Middleton, Seaside Communications in Sydney, Bell Canada, and Xplornet, based in Woodstock, New Brunswick, have been signed with Develop Nova Scotia.

Multiple communities are captured under independent projects by Cross Country, Mainland, Seaside, and Bell Canada using wired technology while Xplornet will cover about 16,000 unserved homes and businesses in Cumberland and Colchester counties through a mix of wired and fixed wireless services. Overall, the projects provide access to connections for more than 42,000 homes and businesses.

Through the Nova Scotia Internet Trust Fund -- a \$193 million fund established in 2018 by the government -- an investment of almost \$45 million is committed to these projects. The investment leverages funds of about \$56 million in private and other public sector funding.

Work has already begun in a few areas and will start in most communities early this year. It is anticipated to be substantially complete over the next year. Another call for projects will be issued by Develop Nova Scotia next week to seek projects for areas that

remain underserved and unserved. Announcements for those projects are anticipated to be announced this summer.

Quotes:

“Great places are accessible and they’re connected. The Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative is a transformative project - in the way services can be delivered and accessed, to support business startup and growth, for tourism and for residents. Our job is to ensure the project is managed with integrity, significant public investment is managed prudently and value is maximized and the service that is ultimately delivered is reliable and high quality now and in the future. We are committed to delivering this for Nova Scotians.”

- Jennifer Angel, CEO, Develop Nova Scotia

“We are beyond excited for this announcement because it means not only Lockett Vineyards and the local wine industry, but all rural businesses in this part of the province, will have the opportunity to step into the 21st century. This empowers operators to modernize, increase efficiency, market our business and tell our stories on a broad scale. More comprehensive and faster operating systems will allow us to offer value-added services to our customers and continue to market our business in a modern and consistent manner.”

- Geena Lockett, owner/general manager, Lockett Vineyards

Quick Facts:

- wired technology projects will provide minimum speeds of 50 Mbps to download, and 10 Mbps to upload, while wireless technologies will provide minimum speeds of 25 Mbps to download, and 5 Mbps to upload, allowing users to browse email, download music and large files, play online games, and stream high definition video
- 10 pre-qualified internet service providers were invited to submit proposals for this request for proposals- a second round of five pre-qualified providers is approved and all 15 are eligible to respond to all future request for proposals
- Develop Nova Scotia is the Crown corporation responsible for the strategy to help connect more communities across the province
- connecting more than 95 per cent of Nova Scotians is a big project and these projects can typically take two to five years

Additional Resources:

A breakdown list of communities by provider, access to potential number of connections, as well as Internet Trust funding, by zone, is available at <https://developns.ca/projects/high-speed-internet/>

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