

DEVELOP NOVA SCOTIA--Access to High-Speed Internet for More Nova Scotians

Providing high-speed internet service to communities across the province has been the priority of the Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative from the beginning.

That is why government invested \$193 million to expand internet access and why Develop Nova Scotia continues to advance projects that extend internet networks and service. Today, Nov. 23, Develop Nova Scotia announced a series of scope expansions to existing contracts for Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative projects, which will provide access to an additional 6,700 homes and businesses.

“The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the critical importance of access to reliable, high-speed internet for business, education and pleasure,” said Minister of Business Geoff MacLellan. “Across the province, people are working from home, students are learning from home and our small businesses are moving to increase their online presence. These changes have fundamentally changed the way our society operates. Equitable access to Internet is more important than it’s ever been.”

Projects associated with these scope expansions will reduce the number of remaining unserved or underserved homes and businesses by over half. By expanding existing projects, Develop Nova Scotia is continuing to accelerate timelines for these homes and businesses to be connected.

These agreements with pre-qualified internet service providers Mainland Telecom and Bell Canada will provide connections to approximately 30 small communities across the province with high-speed internet, at speeds higher than Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) targets. Preparatory and engineering work will begin immediately on the contract extensions, and it is expected all homes and businesses covered by these extensions will have access to improved network by late 2023.

The Nova Scotia Internet Funding Trust is investing \$24 million in these projects, with leveraged funds of \$9 million from other levels of government and the private sector.

Quotes:

“Our work continues with urgency to reach those remaining underserved residents and businesses across the province. We know reliable connections are crucial to Nova Scotians for accessing critical services, growing business and overall quality of life. And removing this barrier to participation also helps us to

attract people to Nova Scotia, in an emerging work from anywhere future. We will not quit until we get the job done.”

- Jennifer Angel, president and CEO, Develop Nova Scotia

“Having access to high-speed internet has made a huge difference for my family and my business. I used to have to drive 20 minutes to the office to do something as simple as payroll. Now I can do it all from home, and it’s made things much easier.”

- Jennie Huskilson, co-owner, H.M. Huskilson’s Funeral Homes and Crematoriums

Rural high-speed internet is a key contributor to the growth and success of business in communities throughout Nova Scotia. The emergence of rural startup companies and work from home initiatives with both local companies as well as large companies throughout Canada has created unique opportunities for rural Nova Scotia to attract new skilled workers and business to our communities. The work of Develop Nova Scotia to provide the high-speed internet infrastructure to support this growth is key to continuing to grow the economy of Nova Scotia and the vibrancy of rural communities throughout the province.

- Doug Jones, president and CEO, Ignite Labs

Quick Facts:

- since the first Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative projects were announced in February 2020, approximately 21-22,000 of a total of 81,500 homes and businesses already have the network in place to provide new or improved high-speed internet, and providers are working to make those connections as quickly as possible
- projects are being implemented on average 50 per cent faster on almost every step of the process when compared to industry standards
- the total investment of \$134 million by the province through the Nova Scotia Internet Funding Trust has leveraged \$129 million of additional funding to date, of which \$111 million is from the private sector
- all projects approved to date for funding by the trust provide at least target speeds required by the CRTC (50 Mbps down/10 Mbps up for wired, 25 Mbps down/5 Mbps up for wireless, with a demonstrated plan to reach 50 Mbps)

Additional Resources:

For a breakdown of communities, partners, access to connection numbers and more details about this round, visit <https://internet.developns.ca>

Information on the Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative is available by visiting this site, by e-mailing info@developns.ca or by calling 1-833-422-6591

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