



Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

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NEWS RELEASE

HIGH-SPEED INTERNET SERVICES FOR EASTERN ONTARIO

Eastern Wardens Call for a Strategic Partnership for the Provision of High-Speed Internet Services

January 14, 2009

NEWS

The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Inc. issued today a Request for Expressions of Interest in developing a network that will help bring modern, high-speed internet services to at least 95% of the people and businesses across Eastern Ontario.

A modern, high-capacity network will allow for residents, educators, health professionals and businesses to make use of the most up-to-date applications including large digital file transfers, video conferencing, inter-active web page promotions, distance learning and popular video file sharing applications like YouTube, Facebook and inter-active gaming.

The EOWC Inc. has been working closely with both the Federal and Provincial Governments to develop a proposal for a network that will have capacity to support growth and prosperity throughout Eastern Ontario for the next 10 years. The next step is to invite the private sector to participate in this important project.

QUOTES

"This is a major step forward," said Ron Gerow, Chair of the EOWC and Warden of Peterborough County. "While progress has been made to improve access to the internet in Eastern Ontario, particularly through the Province's Rural Connections program, we need to build this world-class network to ensure that at least 95% of all of the people and businesses of our region, including those who already have use of the internet now, can make use of a wider range of services in the future."

"Rural residents and businesses in Eastern Ontario who rely on dial-up to obtain access to the internet will already know that the building and operation of a high-

speed network with capacity is critical,” said Leo Finnegan, Mayor of Prince Edward County.

“As elected leaders in our communities, we must encourage all levels of Government to come together with the private sector to build this new high-speed network because it is the key to our County and our region’s growth and quality of life,” said Finnegan. “This new network will also serve to compliment the Provincial Rural Connections program which is focused more on the ‘last mile’ service to customers,” added Finnegan.

“This broadband network is as essential to the future of Eastern Ontario as good roads and bridges,” stated Chairman Gerow. “This is the key to our Region’s future and now is the time to ensure that it gets built, and that is why we are so pleased with the support and encouragement we are receiving from the Federal and Provincial Governments,” he stated.

FACTS

- Approximately 273,000 Eastern Ontarians, 93,500 dwellings, over 5,600 businesses and thousands of tourists and summer residents do not have any Internet connections.
- The capacity of existing Internet connections is already being taxed and new applications are using more and more broadband capacity. As a result, speeds are slowing significantly.
- Many urban residents can get faster service because of higher capacities and regularly can obtain speeds of 3-6 Megabits per second (Mbps) while those who actually are connected to the internet in the rural areas only have access of 1.5 Mbps.
- The EOWC Inc.’s vision for a modern high capacity network is based on a Gigabit Ethernet that is capable of evolving up to 10 Mbps.
- The building of the full network is expected to take 3-5 years.
- Notice of the REOI will be posted on MERX, County websites and run in the major daily newspapers that serve Eastern Ontario.

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