

Rural High Speed Internet Project Update

Last month, the province outlined to you our plans to follow a two-pronged approach to making high-speed internet service available in more rural communities. First, we would work with service providers and municipalities to look for solutions that could be implemented quickly. Then we would hire a team with technical expertise to develop a detailed plan and work with communities on projects for further 'middle mile' development. We also made this public on June 20th through this news release:

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20160620003>

So, in the interests of clarity, there are two parallel streams of work underway.

1. Identifying immediate solutions that could address issues in underserved regions. This is being approached through two mechanisms.
 - a. Request for Information to service providers – Asking them to identify what solutions they could implement by March 31, 2017 and September 30, 2017. Intended to uncover ways to increase service to as many residents as possible.
 - b. Request to Municipalities and Community Groups – We are exploring the option for a small application based grant program. Intended to cover small scale local projects.
2. The second stream is the development of a long term strategic approach to enhancing appropriate infrastructure in the province. Focused on the 'middle mile' which gets high speed internet to points within communities. To accomplish this we are undertaking the following:
 - a. Developing an RFP to source a project team to develop this strategy.
 - i. We will begin a process to seek input from vendors on the draft RFP on July 18th.
 - b. This work will take a provincial view and will be done in conjunction with all key partners like yourselves.

As we work through the various process we encourage Municipalities and their partners to continue work they have underway and continue to work with us on a collaborative approach to addressing this issue.

Thank you,

Monique Arsenault
Business Alignment Specialist
NS Dept of Business