
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2019CITZ0048-001507
July 23, 2019

Ministry of Citizens' Services

Network upgrades to provide an economic boost in the Cariboo

QUESNEL – Work to diversify economic opportunities in the Cariboo will soon get a boost, thanks to wireless network upgrades designed to expand access to modern, high-speed internet for people in the region.

“The activation of reliable, high-speed internet is essential in ensuring people in rural and Indigenous communities have the same prospects to diversify and navigate shifting economic forces as those in urban areas,” said Jinny Sims, Minister of Citizens’ Services. “Investments such as this will help citizens better provide for their families and benefit from local economic success.”

The Connecting British Columbia program is providing \$298,406 to ABC Communications to help fund wireless network upgrades in communities including Bouchie Lake, rural 122 Mile House, rural Lac La Hache, rural Lone Butte (including Horse Lake), Ten Mile Lake and rural Quesnel. The total estimated cost of the project is \$596,812.

“Thank you to the Province for making this investment in the Cariboo,” said John Massier, vice-chair, Cariboo Regional District. “These kinds of investments are vital to our urban and rural communities in the Cariboo Regional District. Improving internet not only grows our communities. Connectivity is a critical need during emergencies, as our recent wildfire seasons have shown.”

Government announced the Province’s largest-ever investment in connectivity under Budget 2019. This \$50-million grant to the Connecting British Columbia program is expected to benefit many more rural communities in B.C.

“The Quesnel & District Chamber of Commerce celebrates the investment to our rural areas through the expansion of high-speed internet, specifically in the Bouchie Lake, 10 Mile Lake and rural Quesnel areas,” said Tracy Bond, vice-president of the Quesnel & District Chamber of Commerce. “The benefits include opening up the marketplace to our rural business members and remote workforce, streamlining business operations to increase competitiveness and strengthening our region through increased communications and mutual support.”

The Connecting British Columbia program supports work to expand high-speed internet access in rural and Indigenous communities by providing grants to cover up to 50% of project costs. The Province continues to welcome applications for funding to help improve connectivity for people living in rural and remote areas of B.C.

The federal government recently launched Canada’s Connectivity Strategy with a \$1.7-billion investment and a goal of all Canadian households having access to high-speed internet by 2030. British Columbia’s support for this target means rural and Indigenous communities in this

province have an incredible opportunity to move forward with their connectivity goals.

“The B.C. government’s commitment to investing in rural and Indigenous connectivity projects will help ensure future generations benefit from a strong economy, wherever they live in the province,” said Falko Kadenbach, vice-president of ABC Communications Ltd. “It is vital that we keep up with changes in technology so that people have the tools they need to succeed. Without these investments, the digital divide between urban and rural communities in B.C. would continue to grow.”

The Ministry of Citizens’ Services routinely works with the federal government, local governments and service providers to find solutions that best meet peoples’ needs. Resources and helpful guidance are available to help communities achieve their connectivity goals.

“With reliable high-speed internet reaching more rural and remote communities than ever before, British Columbians can enjoy a unique rural lifestyle, while not missing out on any of the opportunities that increased connectivity brings,” said Joel McKay, CEO, Northern Development Initiative Trust. “Connectivity generates new prospects for economic diversification in rural B.C., thus strengthening rural communities and contributing to their attractiveness to businesses and people.”

Quick Facts:

- The funding will improve high-speed internet access for people in rural 122 Mile House, Bouchie Lake, Cherryville, Horsefly, rural Lac La Hache, rural Lone Butte (including Horse Lake), rural Mackenzie (including the Gantahaz subdivision), rural Quesnel, Salmon Valley (including Pineview), Ten Mile Lake, rural Osoyoos (including areas near Bridesville) and Lakelse Lake.
- Since July 2017, projects to improve high-speed internet connectivity are underway or completed, benefiting 479 communities, including 83 Indigenous communities and approximately 45,000 households.
- Northern Development Initiative Trust is currently accepting applications for Connecting British Columbia program funding. This funding is available to help rural and Indigenous communities with infrastructure builds and infrastructure planning projects.

Learn More:

For more information on internet in British Columbia and the Province’s work to expand connectivity in rural, remote and Indigenous communities, visit: <https://NetworkBC.gov.bc.ca>

Northern Development Initiative Trust administers the Connecting British Columbia program: <https://www.NorthernDevelopment.bc.ca/>

To see how connectivity changed communities throughout the province, visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/about-the-bc-government/internet-in-bc>

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