

Speaking Notes
Hon. Angus MacIsaac
Minister of Economic Development

Broadband for Rural Nova Scotia
Canaan, Lunenburg County, 10 a.m., December 5, 2007

Thank you Nancy and good morning Premier, Judy, Mr. Bragg, Mr. Schwartz, ladies and gentlemen.

There is no question in my mind about the importance of this project when it comes to economic development. What we are doing is creating a level playing field right across this province.

This is especially important for rural Nova Scotia. While many Nova Scotians enjoy living in a rural setting, there are limitations. Not all of the services available in our urban areas are available in rural settings. Access to broadband presents new opportunities for the 15 per cent of our population who have gone without this service.

As the Premier mentioned, the evidence is clearly visible in the pilot area in Cumberland County. The ability to conduct business 'on-line' is taken for granted by most of us.

But for businesses now connected in the Tidnish to Port Howe area, broadband makes vital communications and sales transactions possible and there really is no comparison to dial up.

For students, like Ashley Collicutt who is with us today, it provides easy access to a world of knowledge and communications. For hospitals it provides quick access to vital information anywhere in the world. For farmers it allows easy and quick transmission of data and management of stock.

Access to high-speed Internet will help our communities become even more attractive to new businesses, skilled workers, and young professionals. They can raise their families in the comfort of rural communities with many of the advantages of our urban centres.

Everyone benefits from broadband. And this has been a journey of partnerships. From the regional development authorities, to the federal government, to the service providers, to the individuals who became champions of this project. And within the provincial government, cooperation and support from a number of different departments.

I want to mention the Halifax Regional Municipality. As you may know, the municipality took advantage of a federal government infrastructure program to provide broadband service to 45 rural communities. We are working with the municipality to ensure there is 100 per cent coverage for all of rural HRM by the end of 2009. We expect an announcement for the region at a later date.

I want to take a moment to publicly thank the project leaders for this initiative. Dan MacDonald, the CEO and President of InNOVAcorp, who not only took on this project, but is really the person responsible for bringing it to the government's attention. Thank you Dan for your dedication, experience and leadership.

Working with Dan, and the MC for today's event is Nancy Flam, who works at Economic Development. Nancy continues to spend countless hours devoted to this project and has become very respected for her knowledge of broadband. Thank you Nancy.

It is people like Dan and Nancy who are helping make Nova Scotia the best place to live, work and raise a family.

Thank you.