

Kawartha Lakes THIS WEEK

\$1 At Select Locations
Voluntary Pay Delivery \$4 Per Month

www.mykawartha.com

City-wide broadband service project ahead of schedule

Work on eight of 21 towers already completed, council told

CATHERINE WHITNALL
STAFF WRITER

April showers will bring more than just May flowers as residents city-wide will also see high-speed Internet bloom.

Technology Alliance Group general manager Lynda Rickard has been working with

staff from Barrett Xplore Inc. as the company works to bring broadband connectivity to the city.

Last fall, City council approved a \$550,000 investment into the company's multi-million dollar project.

Ms. Rickard was extremely happy to share news with council that the project was not only ahead of schedule but, of the 21 towers expected to come on line across the city, work on eight of them has already been completed. These include sites near Pontypool, Fenelon Falls, Oakwood, Manilla and Bolsover.

"People are very excited," said Ms. Rickard, noting the TAG office is receiving numerous calls daily from individuals, especially those

in rural areas of the city, anxious to "get connected."

"These are life-changing things we're doing with broadband," said Ms. Rickard.

She provided an example in the local resident who, due to health reasons, must work from home. The woman has a potential client in New York State but needs to be able to connect to high speed.

The broadband service will be available to about 82 per cent of the city. Those remaining will have to use satellite connections. Unfortunately, Ms. Rickard said this is often "beyond the reach" finan-

cially for most people.

She did note that TAG and the Kawartha Lakes Community Futures Development Corporation are working together to address this matter.

Barrett Xplore is also looking at short-term discounts.

As well, when it comes to servicing the geographic gaps, Ms. Rickard said TAG is presently working with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

Barrett Xplore plans to invest \$11 million into the City of Kawartha Lakes in the next five years.