

Rural residents connecting with new high-speed Internet service

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FREDERICTON (CNB) – Hundreds of rural New Brunswickers are enjoying faster Internet access at lower prices, thanks to a recent agreement between the Government of New Brunswick and Barrett Xplore Inc. ensuring 100 per cent of residents and businesses have access to high-speed service by July 2010.

“I am pleased that Barrett Xplore Inc., is meeting its obligations under the contract and has reduced the price of its Internet service to reflect the government’s investment,” said Business New Brunswick Minister Greg Byrne. “We are well on our way to becoming the first jurisdiction in North America to deliver high-speed Internet to 100 per cent of our people.”

On February 3, 2009, government announced plans to invest \$13 million toward building the infrastructure necessary to provide fixed wireless and satellite Internet coverage in rural New Brunswick. The investment is creating an estimated 200 jobs in New Brunswick.

The government’s investment ensures new broadband customers will pay \$99 for professional installation, regardless of where they live or the type of technology offered. Customers are charged monthly fees of \$44.99 for fixed wireless or \$49.99 for satellite. These fees will include the rental cost of equipment without contract term requirements.

Charles Beaudet, General Manager for Barrett Xplore Inc. Eastern Canada, says customers started receiving the lower rates on February 3, 2009 and hundreds of customers have signed up for the new, high-speed satellite option.

Beaudet says the design and construction schedule for a new wireless network is well underway and on schedule to be completed in May. Barrett Xplore Inc. is planning just under 200 new or improved wireless towers.

“The tall trees and rolling terrain in combination with relatively low population density makes it challenging for us in terms of delivering of high-speed Internet service using our fixed wireless technology,” says Beaudet. “This means that our network will be constructed to utilize fixed wireless towers wherever possible and satellite services for areas that can’t be serviced by the towers.”

About 90 per cent of the province already has access to high-speed Internet, thanks in part to a \$44.6 million federal-provincial infrastructure program created in 2003. This newest investment will extend Internet service to an estimated 39,000 dwellings, mostly located in rural and low-density population areas.



The government is helping to offset the cost because it is not economically viable for the private sector to cover all of the expenses to extend Internet service to sparsely populated areas.

Barrett Xplore Inc. has been contracted to provide high-speed Internet to customers with the minimum configuration standards:

- for fixed wireless – 1.5 Mbps download and 512 kbps upload;
- for satellite – 1.5 Mbps download and 256 kbps upload.

“Our goal was to provide the best possible service for residents and businesses at a fair and affordable price – and at the best possible price for taxpayers,” said Byrne. “I am confident we have achieved this and I am excited about the benefits high-speed Internet access will bring to our rural communities.”

For more information on the service, please see government’s website: <http://www.gnb.ca/cnb/promos/bnb/index-e.asp> or contact XplorNet Customer Care at 1-866-841-6001.

About Barrett Xplore Inc.

Headquartered in Woodstock, New Brunswick, Barrett Xplore Inc. operates XplorNet Internet Services, Canada’s largest rural broadband provider, with customers and dealers in every province and territory. Barrett Xplore Inc. aims to bridge the urban/rural digital divide by ensuring that every Canadian, regardless of where they live, has access to broadband, thereby enabling them to compete effectively in the global economy and gain access essential government and educational services. www.xplor.net

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