

Government delivers on promise to provide high-speed Internet access to every New Brunswicker (08/12/02)

February 3, 2009

WOODSTOCK (CNB) – The Government of New Brunswick is working with Barrett Xplore Inc. to ensure that the remaining 10 per cent of households and businesses in the province without access to high-speed Internet will have it by July 2010, Premier Shawn Graham and Business New Brunswick Minister Greg Byrne announced today.

“We understand that infrastructure is more than just roads and water,” said Graham. “We also need to build up communications infrastructure. Providing high-speed Internet access to everyone in New Brunswick is critical to moving this province toward our goal of self-sufficiency.”

The government is providing up to \$13 million toward the cost of building the infrastructure necessary to deliver high-speed Internet access to every remaining New Brunswicker within 18 months. This investment will help create an estimated 200 new jobs in New Brunswick.

“We believe that high-speed Internet access can help rural communities be more viable in the future,” said Byrne. “It can help small businesses be more profitable, allow people to work from home and upgrade their career credentials through online learning. Providing this access is essential to helping rural New Brunswick compete in the global economy.”

Approximately 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 ensure the remaining 10 per cent of New Brunswickers, mostly living in rural and low-density population areas, have similar access to high-speed Internet service. This number includes approximately 39,000 dwellings, according to 2006 Statistics Canada Census Data and represents the most challenging areas to reach.

New Brunswick-based Internet service provider Barrett Xplore Inc. won the contract following a public tendering process during which the company demonstrated its competency and capability to deliver the government’s objective in a cost-effective manner.

The government is helping to offset the cost of the necessary infrastructure because it is not economically viable for the private sector to cover the entire cost of access in sparsely populated areas of the province.



“We are excited to be part of the government’s mission to bridge the digital divide for rural New Brunswick,” said company chairman, Ed Barrett. “Connecting people in rural communities with high-speed access opens up a world of possibilities and allows them to participate fully in the global economy. It also provides quick and easy access to government, educational and health services.”

Barrett Xplore Inc. will provide all New Brunswickers with access to high-speed Internet via its dual technology solution - fixed wireless and satellite. Fixed wireless will be the primary technology offered, with quality satellite Internet service offered in the most challenging areas to reach. Both of these technologies will provide all residents with fast and affordable service.

The government’s investment ensures new broadband customers will pay \$99 for professional installation, regardless of where they live in the province or the type of technology being offered. Monthly service fees will be set according to the type of technology being offered, and will include the rental cost of equipment with no contract term requirements.

“We are confident that providing access to high-speed Internet to 100 per cent of New Brunswick will solidify our reputation as a technology leader in Canada,” Byrne said. “Bringing broadband access to every New Brunswicker will encourage widespread use of this technology as a tool for economic development, ensuring that rural communities can remain the place to be for business success.”

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.xplornet.com

MEDIA CONTACTS: Deborah Nobes, communications, Business New Brunswick, 506-444-3323. Email: deborah.nobes@gnb.ca; Barrett Xplore Inc. - Darlene Doucet, The Bristol Group, 506-381-1294. Email: ddoucet@bristolgroup.ca.