

Media Release

Matawa Communities look to Strengthen Telecommunications Infrastructure with Broadband Development Project

Thunder Bay, ON – September 2, 2014: The nine Matawa First Nations face a significant digital divide, especially the remote communities that are on satellite and microwave internet services that lack quality services like speed and reliability. As self-determining and autonomous, the First Nations are building broadband systems to deliver better public services to community members. To address this challenge, Matawa First Nations Management is working with the member First Nations toward a locally driven broadband development plan.

On August 26-28, Matawa First Nations Management hosted an open house to provide information on the project displaying different routing as well as visual information on the fibre optic deployment process.

Matawa Education Department and Kikenomaga Kikenjigewen Employment and Training (KKETS) identified the need for the Broadband Project as a result of their teachers having difficulty with reporting, and being unable to receive training, while teaching in the remote communities due to slow connection speeds.

However, broadband is more than just faster Internet: being carried on a fiber optic cable, it can also carry telephone, cable television, and cellular services. All of these services are faster than what currently exist in the communities, and will increase their quality of life in many ways. Community members will be able to have teleconferences and video conferences with physicians and specialists instead of costly trips to the city for visits.

Broadband is important, it helps our people communicate with each other and the rest of the world and puts more resources within reach of our First Nations communities to help raise the standard of living on our First Nations," said David Paul Achneepineskum, CEO of Matawa First Nations Management. "Our First Nations is looking forward to



providing access to modern communications services for our membership and especially youth as they advance their careers. This initiative will allow for greater education opportunities like distance education, provide support for telemedicine, and be a valuable tool for economic and resource development opportunities,” Achneepineksun added.

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About the Matawa First Nations

The Nine Member First Nations of MFNM: Remote (accessible by air or winter ice road) - Eabametoong First Nation, Neskantaga First Nation, Marten Falls First Nation, Nibinamik First Nation, Webequie First Nations. Road Access (accessible by provincial highways and roads)- Constance Lake First Nation, Aroland First Nation, Long Lake #58 First Nation, Ginoogaming First Nation.

