



Algoma District Community Network

Corporate Office: P.O. Box 688, Thessalon, Ontario P0R 1L0
Tel: (705) 248-1505 Email: adnetinfo@adnetalgoma.ca
www.adnetalgoma.ca

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To: East Algoma Region Stakeholders

Broadband and Cellular Update for East Algoma

The purpose of this communication is to update the status of the NetCentral/East Algoma Broadband and Cellular project.

The project team has been active throughout the summer. NetCentral, as the project lead, notified the vendors and the funding agencies of the outcome of the selection process. Both Bell and Rogers were identified as the preferred vendors for various parts of the overall project. With one very minor exception, the team recommended a single preferred vendor for the East Algoma Hwy 17/Hwy 638/ St. Joseph Island/Basswood Lake sub-projects. Completion of the sub-projects will see a marked improvement in cellular access and considerable increase in broadband availability. Unfortunately, procedural guidelines do not allow public disclosure of the vendor at this stage of the process.

I am often asked about the funding process and the protracted timeline. As you can appreciate, as public funds are involved, detailed review and due diligence is exercised at each of the following steps:

- A. RFP and preferred vendor selection
- B. Discussions with funding agency staff
- C. Development of detailed business plans and funding applications
- D. Submissions to provincial and federal ministerial staffs for vetting and review
- E. Submission to funding agency approval authority for a decision
- F. Public announcement of approval
- G. Finalize contracts amongst the funding agencies, the project sponsors and the vendors
- H. Start project implementation

The vendors are currently preparing their detailed business plans (Step C) required as an integral part of the funding application submissions. As of this writing the intent is to have the applications (Step D) ready before the end of September, 2008. The draft vendor agreements state the project must be completed within 24 months of Step F. Based on experience, the time lag between application submission and the start of project implementation may be anywhere from 3 to 18 months. Step G is usually the most complex as all the parties involved, - sponsor, provincial, federal and vendor – have to agree and sign-off on the appropriate square in the matrix before the project can proceed.

I wish to thank the stakeholders who provided documents of support in response to our request of July 11th. We received replies from community councils, private sector business of all sizes, and individual citizens. These indications of support carry considerable weight in the deliberations of the funding bodies and in the past have proven critical to gaining the funding needed. If you have not yet responded, there is still time to submit a letter before the applications are submitted.

At the request of ministry support staffs, NetCentral withdrew its initial application to NOHFC for a cellular project along the Hwy 129 corridor from Thessalon to Chapleau. The support staffs considered the project outside the scope of the programs. The project team is currently working on an alternate proposal that will provide basic coverage along the route. Please note that the Hwy 129 project is a separate project from the East Algoma Cellular and Broadband project. Any issues with the former will not affect the latter.

As always, I am available to come to your organization to present a tailored briefing and have a general discussion about the projects in East Algoma.

If you have any questions concerning this matter, do not hesitate to contact me at 705-649-1252 or e-mail at wlefosne@adnetalgoma.ca

Yours sincerely,



W.J.J. (Wilf) Lefresne
Executive Director
Algoma District Community Network (ADnet)