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Municipalities of Cumberland and Colchester Getting Major Rural Broadband Network

The Municipalities of Cumberland and Colchester have taken a huge step toward their goal of being one of Canada’s most digitally connected rural places. They are teaming up with Xplornet Communications and Develop Nova Scotia on a high-speed internet project that will see \$60 million invested in the region.

Xplornet will deploy nearly 700 kilometres of optic fibre to offer up to 100 Mbps fibre-to-home and fixed wireless services on their network, which will reach more than 21 700 currently underserved households and businesses. A further 2300 addresses will have access to improved satellite service that will reach up to 50 Mbps by the completion of the full network. The three-year project is aiming for 100% high-speed availability in Cumberland and Colchester.

“Our Councils and staff have worked very hard to get us to this point,” said Cumberland Warden Al Gillis. “It’s vital for our future.” Gillis serves on the Joint Internet Committee of Cumberland and Colchester along with Councillor Joe vanVulpen and Colchester Councillors Mike Gregory and Tom Taggart.

Cumberland and Colchester will invest a combined \$6 million dollars over the next four years in exchange for twenty-years of dedicated fibre (‘dark fibre’) which will be used for innovative community services and economic development. The Municipalities will not have an ownership stake in the new network or be responsible for its operation or upkeep.

“We strive for excellent quality of life in our communities. High speed internet will make every part of Colchester and Cumberland a better place to live and do business.” said Colchester’s Mayor, Christine Blair.

The Nova Scotia Internet Funding Trust has approved an investment of \$19.9 million based on eligible project costs that total \$48.5 million. As part of their *Internet to Nova Scotia Initiative*, Develop Nova Scotia will monitor construction and system performance for compliance with service levels promised by Xplornet.

Deputy Premier Karen Casey, who is also MLA for Colchester North, congratulated the two Municipalities. “I am excited that our Government will provide the support needed to improve access to highspeed internet in our rural communities,” said Minister Casey.

Xplornet’s \$34.3 million expenditure in Cumberland-Colchester is their latest in a series of fibre network investments across rural Canada that will reach \$500 million. The Municipalities selected Xplornet in a competitive procurement process.

Xplornet’s Executive Vice President of Strategic Initiatives, Jeff Burlock, describes the municipal collaboration as very positive. “They have a vision for rural community that fits with ours and together we’re going to make it happen.” said Burlock.

Details of the Cumberland-Colchester Internet Project can be found on the Municipal websites at www.cumberlandcounty.ns.ca and www.colchester.ca.

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