



CONNECTIVITY



Community Celebration in Doig River Welcomes High-Speed Connection

Pathways to Technology's goal of connecting every First Nations community in British Columbia to high-speed Internet took a step closer to reality with the addition of a broadband connection in the remote northeastern community of Doig River.

In June, community members joined representatives from the Pathways to Technology team, along with Stephanie Cadieux, former Minister of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government, federal and provincial officials and TELUS executives to make the exciting announcement at the Doig River community centre.

After a performance by the Doig Drummers and an elder prayer, community leaders blended the traditional with the technological – using a caribou antler and beaver pelt switch to activate Doig River's first broadband Internet connection.

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Photo by Alison Brown

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Pathways to Technology

CONNECTING FIRST NATIONS TO THE WORLD

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Community Celebration in Doig River Welcomes High-Speed Connection

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“Technology is our future. I am very happy high-speed Internet has reached our community,” said Doig River First Nation Chief Norman Davis.

Chief Davis noted that until now the community’s Internet connection only reached the Band Office and was slow and spotty.

“The new system will allow our youth as well as workers in the oil and gas and forestry sectors to upgrade education, job skills and safety certifications – right from their homes.”

Once the Internet connection was established, community members immediately saw the power of high-speed access through a number of demonstrations.

Treaty 8 Tribal Chief Liz Logan joined the celebration by video conference link and representatives from the Enowkin Centre in Penticton – where local youth recently returned from a culture and technology workshop – also connected to the event over the Internet.

“I want to congratulate the Doig River people, ANTCO and the Pathways to Technology steering committee for all of their efforts in bringing broadband Internet to the community,” said Cadieux at the event.

“This is one more step in the right direction as we continue to work together to bridge the digital divide and close the education, health and economic gap between First Nations peoples and other British Columbians.”

The broadband connection has also enabled the Doig River First Nation to conduct video-conference meetings with other groups regarding a variety of topics without leaving their offices, resulting in significant savings in time and money.

The Pathways to Technology project is a \$40.8 million province-wide First Nations connectivity initiative managed by All Nations Trust Company (ANTCO) with funding from the Province and the Government of Canada.

The goal is to ensure all First Nations in BC have access to affordable high-speed broadband Internet services to improve healthcare, open up educational and cultural opportunities for children and families, manage resources effectively and give businesses the tools they need to market their products and services around the world.

“The Pathways to Technology project is the 21st century version of the on-ramp for First Nations people and communities who have been bypassed by the Information Highway,” said Ruth Williams, CEO of All Nations Trust Company, which manages the Pathways project.

“Internet access and the technological leap this brings may be the greatest agent of truly transformative change that many remote First Nations have seen in a generation.”

Doig River’s High-Speed Connection Sparking a Digital Revolution

Now that Doig River is connected to high-speed Internet, community members are beginning to take advantage of some of the endless benefits a broadband connection can provide. With every step forward, those in Doig River are helping to bridge the digital divide between First Nations peoples and other British Columbians.

The band is rolling out the high-speed connection to homes in partnership with a local Internet Service Provider. Over the course of the summer, two 12-meter transmission towers were erected and additional broadcast equipment was installed on the existing water tower to provide reliable Internet coverage for the entire community.

As of the end of September, more than half the homes in the community of 250 residents have been connected - boosting everything from community education to existing businesses ventures, which include construction, forestry, and oil and gas operations.

In addition to funding the construction of the broadband infrastructure network, the Pathways to Technology project has also a

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established a Capacity Building Fund and contracted the First Nations Technology Council to provide community training and support programs to give communities and new users the online skills they need to enjoy the full benefits of the Internet.



One of the major benefits of Doig River's new high-speed connection is the capacity for the community and FirstVoices to begin an exciting initiative to digitize the Dane-Zaa language. With the project set to begin in October, community language administrators will soon use audio recording equipment to capture the words, songs and stories of local elders, and then upload those files to the FirstVoices online archive.

From there, community members, as well as those who have left the community for school or work, will be able to access dictionaries, alphabets, stories and other resources in an effort to revitalize the language. There will even be an iPod/iPad app that speakers and others can download to interact with the digital language library.

"We are very excited to be working with the Doig River First Nation to establish this invaluable language archive for the Dane-Zaa language," said Tracey Herbert, Executive Director of the First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council.

"Dane-Zaa language speakers will be joining the other BC First Nations already using FirstVoices technology to ensure that First Nations languages, and the knowledge preserved within them, will last forever."

Doig River is also the first community to be connected under the Pathways project's contract with TELUS. In recognition of this major milestone, TELUS donated five computers to outfit the community's Dane-Zaa Asdishtl'sh Learning Place.

"TELUS has a long history of connecting First Nations communities in BC, and welcomes the opportunity to further that commitment," said Tony Geheran, TELUS senior vice-president of Customer Solutions Delivery. "We will be connecting communities to broadband over some of the most challenging terrain in the world. It is ambitious work, and we have the expertise and determination to take it on to make these critical connections a reality for BC's First Nations."

FNTC Building Capacity Through Pathways

The First Nations Technology Council continues to work with Doig River youth, Garry Oker, Tracey Bonneau and Matthew McNeill of Symbols Design on building multimedia capacity with Doig River youth. As a result of all the work done by the team, some of the Doig youth are already getting contracts from industry in their territory to develop communications materials.

FNTC has contracted Symbols to develop materials for an Animation Workshop and has secured an Apple computer travelling lab so that animation workshops can be delivered in other areas of the province.

The animation workbook is based on Garry Oker's Indigenous Hero's Journey. The Hero will travel from Doig, bringing stories that can be linked with stories from other cultures.

Stay tuned, the Hero could be coming to your territory to bring technical skills to your youth so that they can create their own stories!

FNTC is taking a very broad view of capacity building in the province. As such, we're able to play a role as a bit of a 'broker' and are very excited to be part of a growing relationship between the Blueberry First Nation and Seabird College. Seabird College opened September 2010 and had a graduation of 50 this spring.

Among the courses being offered are Information Technology (including A+ and Cisco Networking Certification), Business IT (targeted at Administration workers), Graphic Design and introductory GIS – a course that was developed by FNTC and that is getting huge interest. Using recently installed technology from Health Canada, Blueberry students will be taking these and other courses being offered by Seabird Island.

Speaking of Technician Training, FNTC is working with the College of New Caledonia and PGNAETA (The Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association) the local ASETS Holder to deliver a Technician Training program aimed at the 17 Nations in the PGNAETA catchment area that includes Prince George.

FNTC is working hard to build partnerships with industry. IBM has gifted FNTC a technology camp that includes 10 copies each of Lego Robotics, Snap Circuits, Data Harvester, numerous software packages and 10 laptops.

They have tested the camp and will be holding another one shortly in Prince George at the Aboriginal Choice school. FNTC will be developing a strategy to move the Technology Camp around the province.

Steering Committee



Network BC: Developing Connections with Broadband

Network BC is committed to helping ensure every one of the 203 First Nations in BC have access to broadband technology. We won't stop until that happens – and likely not even then. You see, with such infectious passion and drive to give all citizens access to the power of the Internet, it makes sense that Network BC would be avid supporters of the incredible work undertaken by the Pathways to Technology project.

Network BC's key focus is to expand broadband access to as many communities and locales as possible in the province – essentially to “Bridge the Digital Divide”. The dedicated team provides leadership and support for the strategic use of telecommunications in British Columbia.

While a worthy pursuit on its own, this work helps make government, health care information, educational opportunities and

other services more open and accessible to people, wherever they live in the province. It also helps us realize our shared vision to improve the quality of life for First Nations citizens.

With our federal partners, the provincial government has invested almost \$41 million into the Pathways to Technology project, which is being led directly by First Nations organizations, for First Nations communities. This project has already seen successes in communities like Iskut and Doig River, both of which have been connected over the past year, and with each success, together we are helping bring British Columbians closer together and open and expand opportunities.

“This project would not be possible without the dedication, creativity and collaboration of everyone involved in Pathways to Technology. Community by community, we are making progress and bringing the Internet to the fingertips of more young people and families in our province,” said Stephanie Cadieux, former Minister of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government.

For rural and remote areas, Network BC develops strategies to increase

opportunities for connectivity and to sustain the connectivity levels we've already achieved. This means coordinating and facilitating broadband connectivity among provincial and federal government organizations, non-government organizations, First Nations and other communities, and the telecommunications sector.

As well, provincial ministries and local governments rely on us to provide expertise on the strategic use of telecommunications in BC and its potential for enabling government to improve the access that British Columbians have to provincial programs and information on health, education and economic opportunities.

Network BC is part of the BC Ministry of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government. To learn more about us, please visit www.network.gov.bc.ca.

Pathways Fast Facts

- The Pathways to Technology project was previously funded through \$23.3 million from the Province and \$17.5 million from Health Canada.
- TELUS, Northwestel and other private telecommunication providers are delivering the necessary infrastructure to overcome the geographic and logistical challenges of connecting remote and rural First Nations communities in BC.
- Pathways to Technology project has also established a \$5-million Capacity Building Fund to provide training and support programs to give communities the technical skills they need to capitalize on the full benefits of the Internet.
- Currently, 93 per cent of British Columbians have access to a high-speed Internet connection, and 157 of 203 First Nations communities already have some Internet access, making BC one of the most connected jurisdictions in the world.



June 14 - Former Minister Cadieux and Chief Norman Davis flip the switch that brings connectivity to the Doig River First Nation in front of more than 200 band members and guests at a community celebration.



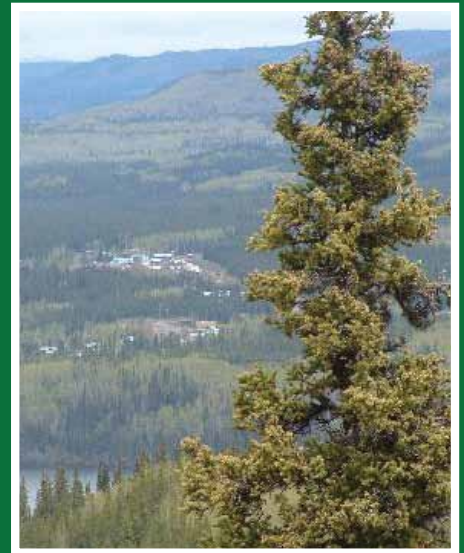
Steering Committee

Community Spotlight Dease Lake 9

Bringing the power of the Internet to First Nation communities across the province can have a profound impact.

A perfect example of that is the community of Dease Lake 9. Located just a few hours south of the Yukon border, the First Nation is located in the heart of Cassiar Country. With a long a history in gold discovery and guiding, Dease Lake 9 is now rapidly expanding into the tourism, resource and industrial fields, with jade mining playing a big role in the local economy.

“The partnership with Pathways has been an extremely rewarding one for Northwestel. The Internet service provided is every bit as fast as can be found in larger southern centres and residents pay no more than in any other northern community,” said Mark Walker, Vice President of Business Solutions with Northwestel. “It is obvious that there is real demand for the service as our customer numbers surpassed our expectations in the first year of operation.”



Prior to working with Pathways to Technology, the community had only unreliable satellite and dial-up Internet connections. That all changed when Dease Lake 9 became one of the first communities in the province to receive the benefits of the Pathways program. Now, with the help of Northwestel and microwave technology, the community’s offices, schools, and homes can access high-speed Internet.

“This has had a big impact throughout the community,” said Jamie Sterritt, Community Relations Officer with the Pathways Project. “Having high-speed Internet access gives Dease Lake a real opportunity to communicate with people in other towns and cities, whether they are an hour or a world away.”

As part of the Pathways project, Northwestel was also contracted to provide broadband internet service to Iskut and Telegraph Creek, two other Tahltan communities.

The new Internet services provided by Pathways to Technology are already allowing First Nations businesses to conference with other communities without even stepping out the door, while using online banking to manage everything from investments to taxes. Students can also access endless educational resources online, and stay in contact with their friends through social media websites like Facebook. Even the community itself will be benefitting from the chance to attract

tourism and businesses opportunities with a presence on the Internet.

Moving forward, Pathways to Technology will be working with the First Nations Health Council as part of their efforts to create a fully integrated First Nations clinical telehealth network in British Columbia. The people living in Dease Lake, Telegraph Creek and Iskut will soon be able to have remote appointments with doctors and specialists, rather than travelling hundreds of kilometres for treatment.

Carrier-Sekani Family Services Goes Digital

Since partnering with Pathways to Technology to establish high-speed Internet infrastructure in many areas of BC's North earlier this year, Carrier-Sekani Family Services (CSFS) has been putting these newfound resources into action. With offices in Prince George, Burns Lake and Vanderhoof and the communities they serve now connected to broadband Internet, CSFS is ready to make the digital transition to better serve First Nations communities across the region.

"Most of our patients are living in remote areas that had little to no online access, and we were forced to use paper records and documents in the past," said Carrier-Sekani Family Services Project Manager Carol Reimer. "Now we will be able to make the move to electronic healthcare, and streamline our operation to ensure we provide top-of-the-line care to even the most distant First Nations communities."

Part of that transition begins this fall, when CSFS will review all of their internal positions to determine which new software will best serve their various projects – tailoring the tools to fit the tasks at hand. From there, the organization plans to install virtual clinics in each of the 10 First Nations communities served by Carrier Sekani Family Services.



This advance in technology represents a real shift in the provision of timely care for BC's First Nations, with doctors and nurses soon able to detect many medical warning signs and concerns with the click of a mouse. The opportunity has been welcomed by patients too, with youth and elders alike excited about the prospect of cutting edge health care, even hundreds of kilometres from a major city.

"Having the ability to video conference and follow-up with doctors via the Internet cuts the wait time for many of our patients from more than a month to a matter of days," added Reimer.

"Whether it's a matter of monitoring treatments or simply adjusting medications, the Pathways project has opened the door to a timely level of care that has never been seen in this part of the province – a level that most British Columbians have

enjoyed for decades."

The benefits of online healthcare will extend beyond the patients in each community too, with nurses from dozens of remote First Nations bands soon able to connect with doctors from across the province and the country.

In a matter of months doctors, dieticians and even specialists will be able to speak directly to those on the ground via the Internet, avoiding the cost and effort of travelling many hours for a consultation.

Still, Carrier-Sekani Family Services remains steady in their pursuit of these services, ensuring the funding and infrastructure are in place before taking each important step forward. It's with that mentality that CSFS believes a healthcare revolution for BC First Nations is not only possible, but also well within reach.

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Interactive Connections - Online map charts a growing web of connectivity, linking communities empowered by the Pathways project throughout British Columbia

Partner Profile - First Nations Health Council



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