



CONNECTIVITY



High Speed Internet Access Opens More Doors in 2012

The Pathways to Technology project continues to gather momentum in 2012 as technical crews extend the web of connectivity to more First Nations communities throughout the province.

The multi-year initiative will connect or enhance connectivity in remote First Nations communities that currently have no Internet access or only limited service.

Following the project's first full year of operations, 16 communities are now enjoying the benefits of high-speed Internet connectivity and another eight communities are expected to be online by May 2012.

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Pathways to Technology

CONNECTING FIRST NATIONS TO THE WORLD

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Last year saw the completion of a number of important project milestones, including the highly-anticipated build-out of a telehealth network in Carrier-Sekani communities, undertaken by Carrier-Sekani Family Services. The Pathways project is proud to have been able to finance a large portion of the associated connectivity infrastructure costs of that initiative.

The CSFS project, which successfully launched in the spring of 2011, features high-speed connections to 10 locations in all, including six on-reserve health centres. Work is ongoing to build on this and roll-out Internet access to local residents.

In the Peace region, two communities were wired with high-speed Internet in 2011. First, work was completed on the 'last mile' portion of the Blueberry River First Nation connection – expanding the existing point-of-presence infrastructure to make connectivity available throughout the community.

Secondly, the Doig River First Nation was officially connected in June 2011 and the occasion was marked by the Pathways project with a community celebration attended by Chief and Council, community members, TELUS and officials from the provincial and federal governments. Doig River is the first community to be connected through the project's agreement with TELUS.



Crews installing a wireless transmission tower in Doig River.

The Pathways project's largest initiative to date, Telegraph Creek, came online in October after a long and complex build undertaken by Northwestel. The project team and the interim First Nations Health Authority are now working with Northwestel, Health Canada and Network BC to achieve enhanced connections to the health centres in Telegraph Creek and Iskut.

The project will make further gains in 2012, extending connectivity to other First Nations communities in the eastern and central regions of the province over remote and challenging terrain.

Early this year, work was completed in Canim Lake and Homalco. Within the first four months of 2012 these communities will be joined by Ashcroft, Sugarcane (Williams Lake), Tache, Yekooche, Mount Currie and Stellat'en.

The Pathways team continues to engage with many more First Nations to lay the groundwork for high-speed connectivity in the community. This important step helps to identify community needs and the best implementation strategy to get them connected as quickly and cost-effectively as possible.

In addition to funding the construction of the broadband infrastructure network, the Pathways project has also established a \$5 million Capacity Building Fund and contracted the First Nations Technology Council to provide training and support programs to give communities and new users the online skills they need to enjoy the full benefits of the Internet.

All Nations Trust Company, which manages the Pathways to Technology initiative, would like to acknowledge and thank the project's steering committee members the First Nations Health Council and the First Nations Technology Council, as well as the many people in communities through the province who are helping to move this project forward in 2012 and bring high-speed Internet connectivity to all First Nations in British Columbia.



Interactive Map Brings Pathways to Life

As the Pathways project continues to connect more First Nations communities across British Columbia, a new online map will help people understand the incredible scope of this unique project with just the click of a mouse.

With the help of Google Maps Service™ and the Province of British Columbia's digital database, All Nations Trust Company (ANTCO) has developed an interactive map which demonstrates the geographical challenges the project team is facing in order to bring broadband connectivity to remote communities across the province.



“It’s a visual snapshot – a way to replace spreadsheets and numbers with a geographic picture that really demonstrates the magnitude of this venture,” said the Pathways to Technology technical advisor and analyst Bob Duggan.

“Many websites are now displaying an interactive map which helps people find information like addresses, contact information, and even driving directions. We have taken that same premise and applied it to the Pathways project.”

Visitors to the Pathways website (www.pathwaystotechnology.ca) can not only see the connectivity status of the province

on a single map, but they will also be able to easily take the controls, moving and focusing into specific areas and communities including by Health Authority.

By zooming in on a particular region of the map, people can also access satellite imagery of the area and begin to appreciate the diverse landscapes and environments found across British Columbia. Clicking on a specific First Nations community location will display more information including community name, First Nation name, band number, as well as current connectivity status.

As the Pathways project connects other First Nations communities to the power of broadband Internet, the interactive map will also be updated to provide the latest status for every region in the province. Now people interested in the Pathways project can watch the web of connectivity grow and spread throughout the province as this important initiative progresses towards its goal of ensuring all 203 First Nations in BC have access to reliable high-speed Internet service.

Training Courses Turn Technology into Action

The First Nations Technology Council has a busy calendar of upcoming training and support programs to help communities and people interested in building their technology skills.

FNTC continues to build strong partnerships that are benefitting First Nations in our province. The organization is responsible for developing and delivering capacity building programs as part of the Pathways to Technology initiative, ensuring newly connected communities are able to turn technology into action for education, health, culture and business.

Check out a sampling of upcoming workshops and events:

Technician Training - FNTC is supporting CISCO Network training for staff at Carrier Sekani Family Services who are leading the first telehealth project in the province. The Pathways project partnered with CSFS to finance a significant portion of the connectivity costs and add community connections for homes and businesses in 10 First Nations communities in the area.

A new First Nations-targeted Technician Training Program has been developed in collaboration with the College of New Caledonia in Prince George and the Prince George Nechako Aboriginal Employment and Training Association. The program includes a two-week Essential Skills component that will lead into hands-on, A+ Industry Certified technical training for up to 16 people, including certification in:

- Microsoft Customer Support Specialists
- CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associate)
- CompTIA Server +
- Copper and Fiber | Certified Installer “FOA” Certification



Community Technology Planning - FNTC has developed a revised Community Technology Plan template to support First Nations in getting a clearer picture of their current hardware, software and human capacity with a goal of planning for future needs.

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Steering Committee

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Homalco First Nation, newly connected with broadband Internet by the Pathways project, is taking the lead on testing the template which will be used to support other communities moving forward. Councillor Darren Blaney commented, "Let's get this done!" – demonstrating the importance Homalco places on technology planning.

In some cases, it will make more sense for groups of Nations to plan their technology together. This approach is being taken by FNTC when looking at specialized technical training initiatives where it is unlikely an entire cohort would come from one small community.

GIS Curriculum - FNTC has developed a First Nations specific GIS curriculum that will be delivered for credit through Seabird College. The online education course will have support from a mentor with over 20 years of GIS teaching experience.

In the past, FNTC has delivered a series of one-week GIS courses that were over-subscribed and continues to receive requests for more training. FNTC and Seabird are targeting mid-February for a start date. For information, or to register, contact mitch.krupp@fntc.info

ICT Summit - Get set to begin 'Exploring New Worlds' at the annual ICT Summit, February 23-25 in Vancouver, co-hosted by FNTC and the Pacific Community Networks Association.

There will be many hands-on capacity building opportunities available, plus many sessions spotlighting the great work being done in communities leading the way on using technology in innovative ways.

Keynote speaker Commander John Herrington, the first Native American to walk in space, will stress the importance of supporting youth to continue learning math and science.

Plan to attend. For more information visit www.ictsummit.ca

Community Spotlight: Homalco

One of the latest communities to achieve connectivity is Homalco 9, located on Vancouver Island approximately 10 kilometres south of Campbell River. With a staple industry of salmon fishing for hundreds of years, the Homalco First Nation is now exploring hydroelectric power and eco-tourism as a new wave of business ventures for the band.

The first step toward a high-speed Internet connection for Homalco came in the spring of 2011, when the Pathways to Technology team engaged with the community about its needs. This community planning stage identified an existing cable television infrastructure that could be upgraded to deliver broadband service throughout the community – a first for the project.

This led to an innovative dual solution for how best to connect Homalco. The band office has been directly connected with a TELUS fiber-optic line while the local cable television service with Conuma Cable has been retrofitted to ensure each home in the community will be able to send and receive an Internet signal through their cable line, similar to services in many metropolitan BC cities.

This example highlights the complexity of the project in coordinating between several telecommunications providers to deliver connectivity to communities.



Newly connected Homalco Community Health Centre.

"By providing broadband cable to every house in Homalco, we are delivering a reliable, high-speed connection to a community that in the past was reliant on slow dial-up Internet – despite being so close to a major urban center," said Jamie Sterritt, the Pathways project's Community Relations Officer.

"Through our partnership with Conuma Cable, we have been able to link this entire community with existing underground cables, eliminating the need for overhead lines and dozens of utility poles," he added.

There are also benefits for Homalco's new health centre, which opened this past summer. The 11-room facility offers programs such as Community Health Nursing, Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative, Home and Community Care, as well as services to children, youth and adults.

Now, with the addition of a high-speed Internet connection, the health centre will be able to partner with the First Nations Health Council as part of their efforts to create a fully-integrated First Nations clinical telehealth network in British Columbia, and expand its programs to include state of the art treatments and services.

"Our community members are thrilled about the Pathways project work for our community," said Alison Trenholm, Homalco First Nation's Band Manager. "Now our people will be able to access a world of online resources from right at home – not to mention the endless benefits for our band office and brand new health centre."

The new Internet services provided by the Pathways to Technology project are already allowing people in the community to access resources never before available from the comfort of their homes and offices. With online health and business opportunities now on the horizon, Homalco is just another example of how the Pathways project is bridging the digital divide across British Columbia.

Partner Profile: First Nations Health Council - Panorama Project Takes eHealth Local

The Pathways to Technology initiative continues to pave the way for digital revolutions in health care for First Nations throughout BC and is taking strides towards their goal of providing reliable high-speed internet connectivity to all First Nations in the province.

The Pathways initiative, managed by All Nations Trust Company in collaboration with the First Nations Health Council and the First Nations Technology Council with funding from the Province of BC and Health Canada, is a key piece of the puzzle in raising the socio-economic bar for communities.

The First Nations Panorama Implementation Project (FNPIP) is a great example of communities pushing forward in eHealth development with the ultimate goal of taking better control of their health care needs.

“For years Community Health Nurses working in First Nations health centres could not access the provincial information repository for communicable disease control which includes immunization data. This has made their job and the task of providing safe quality care more difficult,” said Mark Sommerfeld, Community and Organizational Development Co-ordinator with the FNPIP.

“With the new Panorama public health information management tool being implemented in BC there is a significant opportunity for the integration of community-level First Nations public health processes and information with that of the larger BC health care community,” added Sommerfeld.

“The FNPIP is taking a community-driven partnership approach. Twenty-eight First Nations health services organizations are taking part in the ‘Group One’ implementation initiative and will be leading their own individual Panorama implementation projects with the FNPIP team playing supporting roles. A key part of this approach is a comprehensive Implementation Toolkit, developed by the FNPIP team, that will progressively assist the community project teams to move through their implementation process,” noted Sommerfeld.

The FNPIP is a Tripartite eHealth project funded by Health Canada and hosted by the BC Centre for Disease Control that is working closely with the larger provincial Panorama Implementation Project with BC Health Authorities and the Ministry of Health. FNPIP represents an important and tangible eHealth implementation that will leverage the larger infrastructure developments around network and connectivity.

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Group I Sites for the BC First Nations Panorama Implementation Project:

- Hartley Bay Nursing Station
- Kitsumkalum Health
- Port Simpson Nursing Station
- Bella Coola
- Carrier Sekani Family Services
- Hailika`as Heiltsuk Health Centre
- Lake Babine
- Ulkatcho Indian Band
- Ktunaxa Nation Health
- Lillooet Health Centre
- Okanagan Indian Band
- Penticton Indian Band Wellness Centre
- Quatsino First Nation
- Scw`exmx Community Health Society
- Seabird Island Health Services
- Sto:Lo Nation
- Three Corners Health Services Society
- Westbank First Nation
- Chehalis Health Service
- Pauquachin First Nation
- Ts`ewulhtun Health Centre
- Tseycum Health
- Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council
- Tla`Amin Community Health Services
- Escetemc First Nation

Steering Committee



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The efforts of First Nations health service organizations in taking on the implementation of Panorama, and its use by nurses in health centres, will have a significant impact on improving health outcomes for First Nations people and in chipping away unnecessary jurisdictional barriers in the provision of quality care.

The FNPIP is in the early stages of working through the implementation toolkit with a number of community based implementation teams.

To date the Sauteau First Nation, Nak'azdli First Nation, Lax Kwalaams Health, Penticton Indian Band, Ulkatcho First Nation, Three Corners Health Society, Ktunaxa Nation Health and Cowichan Tribes are starting to move forward in setting up their implementation projects. In particular the Sauteau and Nak'azdli First Nation have achieved their first milestones of site implementation Project Charters and are receiving accolades for their efforts.

"The Sauteau and Nak'azdli First Nations should be congratulated for their work to date. There's really no cookie cutter solution for the different regions we are working in, each community has such different wants and needs to use the technology for health purposes," said Steven Raphael, eHealth Development Co-ordinator with the First Nations Health Council of BC.



Health officials from the Sauteau First Nations and FNPIP representatives met recently to discuss the project's implementation in the community.

Left to Right: FNPIP Community & Organizational Development Coordinator Mark Sommerfeld, FNPIP Project Manager Karl Mallory, Sauteau First Nations Community Health Nurse Gale Kiraly, former Sauteau First Nations Health Director Doreen L'Hirondelle, and eHealth Development Co-ordinator Steven Raphael.

"It's really a community-driven nation-based process. With the remoteness of some communities, even the basics of having reliable sources of power are challenges that we are dealing with, but there are great steps being taken in projects like the FNPIP and others," Raphael added.

With invaluable educational resources, access to the Internet also opens up cultural and employment opportunities for all citizens and gives local businesses the tools they need to market their services around the world.

Led by and for First Nations communities the initiatives being taken are not only benefiting their own communities but are responsible for enhancing the quality of life for many rural citizens in the province where infrastructure is lacking.

The Pathways project continues to work with a shared vision to improve the quality of life of all First Nations in British Columbia, enhancing health care in rural communities and molding generations to become the electronic leaders of tomorrow.

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In Our Next Issue

Community Spotlight - Kitasoo

Project Updates - The Pathways project continues to carve inroads into the far north.

Pathways Benefits - How the economic, business and social benefits of the project are reaching far beyond the hardware.



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