



Keewaytinook Okimakanak's K-Net to deliver expanded satellite services to remote communities

K-Net strikes new partnership with Industry Canada, Telesat Canada

THUNDER BAY, ON, February 14th, 2002 — Remote communities across Canada can look forward to affordable access to multimedia services — such as high-speed Internet access, tele-health, e-commerce and tele-education — thanks to an innovative partnership announced today between Keewaytinook Okimakanak, Industry Canada and Telesat Canada.

"K-Net Services will work with communities served by satellite to develop their business cases for accessing high speed data connectivity using bandwidth made available to Industry Canada by Telesat," said Geordi Kakepetum, executive director of Keewaytinook Okimakanak.

As part of its commitment to enhance communications services to rural and remote communities, Telesat made two channels on its new Anik F3 satellite available for the federal government to use to serve public institutions in remote areas of Canada. The two channels, or transponders, are able to provide enhanced multimedia connections for remote communities. In advance of the launch of Anik F3, Telesat has made one C-band channel available today on the existing Anik E2 satellite.

"This satellite capacity gives remote communities an opportunity for better services and applications that will put them on a par with their southern neighbours," said Michael Binder, Assistant Deputy Minister for Spectrum, Information Technology and Telecommunications at Industry Canada. "These are small but significant steps in the drive to bring broadband connectivity to all Canadians."

Paul Bush, Telesat's vice president of corporate development, helped set the wheels in motion last fall. He met with K-Net Services and Industry Canada staff to develop a strategy to use the available satellite bandwidth for some of the remote First Nations that now obtain data services using C-band equipment.

"In making this satellite space available, Telesat is committed to helping connect Canadians to broadband communications — no matter where they live," Bush said. "These initial services on Telesat's Anik E2 satellite are just the beginning. We'll do even more with Anik F3."

K-Net worked with Telesat and staff from Industry Canada's FedNor and SchoolNet programs to prepare a proposal so that the Fort Severn and Slate Falls First Nation could begin using this available satellite data channel as soon as possible. As more communities were identified as potential partners in the use of this service, Keewaytinook Okimakanak proposed to work with the various partners to share in this resource. "K-Net Services will now be working with Industry Canada, as their agent and with Telesat Canada to deploy a portion of this benefit", said Carl Seibel, a telecommunications officer at FedNor.

What does all this mean for the people of Fort Severn First Nation, located on the northern shores of the Hudson Bay?

"It means we'll have equitable and affordable access to the bandwidth we need to receive high speed data services such as tele-health, secondary and post-secondary education, and Internet access," said Chief George Kakekaspan, who attended the news conference using a videoconference link from his community. "We'll now be able to develop our local businesses and services to provide the same level of support available in other parts of this country."

About K-Net

K-Net (www.knet.ca) is a regional broadband network linking First Nations and their service organizations using video conferencing, IP telephony, on-line forums, e-mail, and other web-based communication tools. K-Net became Industry Canada's Aboriginal Smart Demonstration project in May 2000.

Keewaytinook Okimakanak, the Oji-Cree term for "Northern Chiefs," is a non-political Chiefs Council that advises and assists member First Nations at Deer Lake, Fort Severn, Keewaywin, McDowell Lake, North Spirit Lake, and Poplar Hill.

About Telesat

Telesat (www.telesat.ca) is a world leader in satellite operations and systems management. The company made history in 1972 with the launch of the first domestic commercial communications satellite in geostationary orbit. Today, Telesat competes with other top international satellite fleets in providing telecommunications and broadcasting services throughout the Americas. Telesat is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BCE Inc., one of the world's premier communications companies.

- 30 -

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