

For Immediate Release

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Local Access Contract Will Connect 24,000 Households and Businesses to Eastern Ontario's Broadband Network

(Haliburton County) Ontario – The Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus has awarded a **Local Access Contract** that will provide more than 24,000 homes and businesses improved access to high-speed Internet. The region includes portions of Haliburton County and a northern part of Peterborough County.

As part of the contract, Bell Aliant will provide a wired or DSL solution that will expand broadband access in the 2,700 square-kilometre area. Bell Aliant will lay 121 kilometres of new fibre optic cable and rely on eight new "Points of Presence" within the region.

"We are extremely pleased to announce this contract," said Mel Campbell, Chair of the EOWC. "This will expand high-quality wired Internet access in an area that had been hard to service because of its dispersed population."

Satellite services will provide the balance of high-speed coverage in the area. Satellite access remains the best fit technology for very sparsely populated areas or regions with difficult terrain. Contracts have already been signed to deliver high-speed via satellite at improved pricing across Eastern Ontario.

This is the sixth of several contracts that will be awarded to deliver high-speed Internet through wired and fixed wireless services as part of the Eastern Ontario regional broadband project. The \$170 million project is funded by federal, provincial and municipal governments and private sector investment. Work to build a massive, 5,500-km fibre optic network is already underway.

"We are making excellent progress in building a new regional network that will allow our residents and businesses to prosper," added Dave Burton, Chair of Eastern Ontario Regional Network Inc., (EORN). "Connecting to the Internet with higher speeds will open new doors for our communities in terms of quality of life and economic growth."

EORN is a not-for-profit organization established by the EOWC to manage all contracts awarded as part of the project.

Once up and running in fall 2012, a variety of service packages will be offered, ranging from 1.5 Mbps to up to 10 Mbps. These speeds will enable users to stream video and other innovative applications that will support various sectors, including business, health and education.

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Backgrounder: Eastern Ontario Regional Network

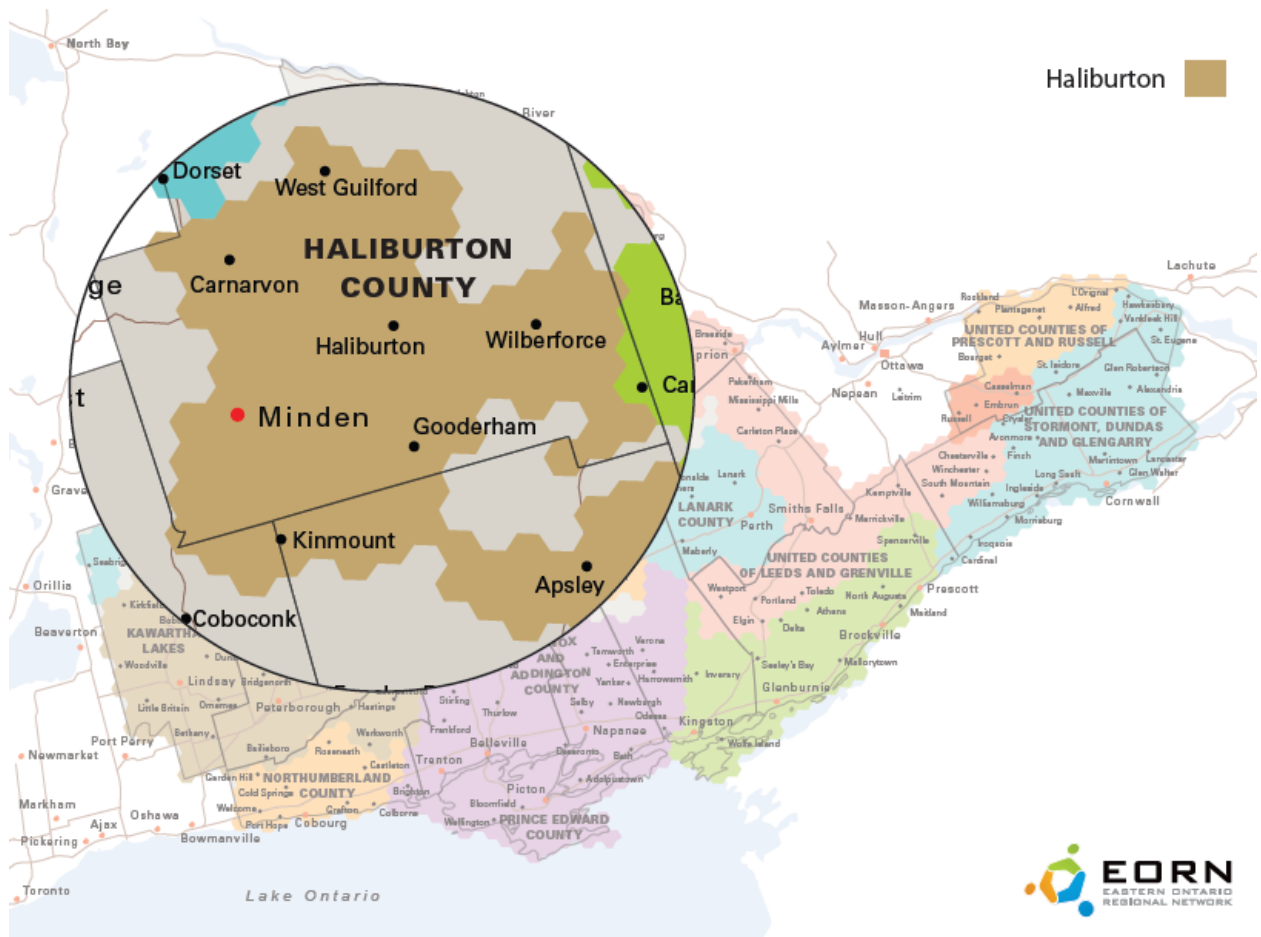
The Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus is spearheading a \$170 million broadband project that will see improved access to high-speed Internet across the region by 2014. Given that high-speed is essential for a host of services and information delivered by the Internet, expanding this access is critical to improving the quality of life and economic growth of the community.

The project is supported through substantial investments from federal, provincial and local governments, along with private sector contributions. To manage this important initiative, the EOWC created the Eastern Ontario Regional Network.

- The project is made up of three main components:
 - **Backbone:** A scalable network of 5,500 km of new and existing fibre connected by new generation high-speed switches in 160 Points of Presence throughout Eastern Ontario. Construction began last year on this wired portion of the network.
 - **Access:** Links the end-user, such as businesses and residents, to the network through either wired or fixed wireless technology. EORN will promote high-speed bandwidth access that bridges the urban/rural price gap. ISPs can bid and receive funding to assist in improving and adding new infrastructure.
 - **Satellite:** Ensures no one is left behind by providing satellite access for those that the wireless and wired network cannot reach. Improved and more affordable satellite services are now available through Xplornet Communications Inc. by contacting any of the company's dealers across the EORN region.
- The project aims to improve access to the Internet with higher speeds and bandwidth to at least 95 per cent of homes and businesses in Eastern Ontario, a majority of which will see speeds up to 10 Mbps.
- The entire project encompasses a region of more than one million people spread out over 50,000 square kilometres.
- A mix of wired, wireless and satellite technologies will be required to deliver high-speed access across the varied terrain and remote communities of the region.
- EORN will choose technology based on the best fit for the needs of a particular area and is negotiating improved rates from Internet service providers through a competitive proposal process.

Quick Facts: Haliburton zone

- The Haliburton zone spans more than 2,700 square kilometres across Haliburton County and the northern portion of Kawartha Lakes.
- About two-thirds of the more than 24,000 households in the area are seasonal properties. The area encompasses communities such as Haliburton Village, West Guilford, Carnarvon, Wilberforce, Gooderham, Kinmount and Apsley.
- The contract provides dedicated wired service of up to 10 Mbps at competitive pricing, where available. The remaining households will gain access via a satellite solution with improved pricing and technologies, as already negotiated with Xplornet Communications Inc.



Map: The Haliburton zone, shaded above in tan, includes portions Haliburton County and a northern portion of Peterborough County.