

Grapevine Article

Denman Island Internet Committee Report

In the summer of 2018, a group of Denman residents met to try to have the Internet service on Denman improved. We believed that it might be possible to persuade Telus to improve its service. We have learned that our current service, using the copper phone lines, is obsolete and that Telus won't upgrade it. Telus now uses fiber-optic cable, instead of the copper wiring. Changing to this will be expensive. We are too few, and are too spread out, for this to be attractive to Telus, on a business basis.

The CRTC, the federal regulatory authority, has declared that a basic Internet service, providing a minimum download speed of 50 Mbps and upload speed of 10 Mbps, should be available to all Canadians. The Federal Government has accepted this view. Neither of the basic services (Telus or Xplornet) offered on Denman come close to meeting this minimum level of service.

We learned that some money has been made available by both the Federal and Provincial Governments to assist remote or rural communities to arrange better Internet. Our group, now a committee of DIRA, is trying to get some of this funding, working with a similar group of residents on Hornby.

It has been a challenge, learning how to qualify for some of this money. We've had several conference calls with Telus management and attended presentations by the Provincial Government. We've asked for and received support from our MP, our MLA, and our representative at the CVRD. We've had many meetings with our colleagues from Hornby, to coordinate a joint approach. While busy doing this we didn't communicate well with the community; we will communicate regularly from now on.

We have had some success! We learned that both levels of government require extensive studies to demonstrate that we have considered different ways of providing service and that the community supports improved Internet. Working together with Hornby, we have succeeded in obtaining grants totalling approximately \$35,000.00, and have raised another \$15,000.00 from local sources – Denman Works and HICEC. Part of this money is currently being spent on a study of our situation by telecommunications engineers, a study commonly referred to as the Digital Map and Implementation Plan. Part will be spent on community consultation. We need to demonstrate to both the Federal and Provincial Governments that the community wants and needs Internet service. We need your help to do so.

Over the next few weeks we will write articles detailing our current options for Internet and what the options for improvements are. We will be asking that you demonstrate your support for better Internet on Denman and Hornby. This may mean participating in another survey or by attending a meeting or both. This is crucial to secure government funding.