

News Release

For immediate release

Pontiac MP Will Amos announces \$112 million in government funding to provide high-speed Internet access to more than 18,000 homes in the Outaouais by September 2022

May 4, 2021 - Chelsea, Quebec

Historic steps toward rural Internet connectivity were announced today by MP Will Amos with a joint investment by the governments of Canada and Quebec of \$ 81.36 million, made through the Operation High Speed Canada-Quebec initiative. With this funding, 18,200 households in the Outaouais region will have fibre optic infrastructure built directly to their home or business by September 2022. The projects, with a total value of \$112.09 million once private sector investments are incorporated, will be implemented by Cogeco and Xplornet as ISP partners.

The announcement was made by MP Amos, who also serves as Parliamentary Secretary to the Federal Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry (Science), along with the Parliamentary Secretary to the Federal Minister of Seniors and MP for Argenteuil – La Petite-Nation, Stéphane Lauzon; the provincial Minister of Families, Minister responsible for the Outaouais region and MNA for Papineau, Mathieu Lacombe; Parliamentary Assistant to the Premier of Quebec (High Speed Internet Component) and MNA for Orford, Gilles Bélanger; MNA for Gatineau, Robert Bussière; the general manager for Quebec and vice-president, programming and relations with the communities, at Cogeco, Johanne Hinse; and Xplornet vice-president for Quebec, Charles Beaudet, made the announcement today.

To deploy high-speed Internet fibre (FTTH) connectivity across the Outaouais, Cogeco will receive a sum of \$23.8 million to connect 2,890 households, while Xplornet will receive \$57.5 million to serve 15,310 households. These investments will accelerate the establishment of reliable and efficient infrastructure in the targeted municipalities and cover over 99% of all households and businesses. Over the coming 120 days, Cogeco and Xplornet will conduct an exhaustive inventory in the municipalities identified below to ensure that no homes are left without service. The announcement follows the April 16 announcement in which Bell confirmed it would connect 10,600 homes in the Outaouais region with government support of \$84 million.

With this funding, Xplornet will connect households across the riding of Pontiac. For the MRC Vallée-de-la-Gatineau, the following municipalities are included in their projects: Aumont, Blue Sea, Bois-Franc, Bouchette, Cayamant, Délage, Egan-Sud, Gracefield, Kazabazua, Lac-Sainte-Marie, Maniwaki, Messines, Montcerf-Lytton and Sainte-Thérèse-de-la-Gatineau, as well as Kitigan Zibi and Lac-Pythonga. For the MRC Pontiac, the following municipalities are included in their projects: Allyn-and-Cawood, Bristol, Bryson, Campbell's Bay, Clarendon, Fort-Coulonge, L'Île-du-Grand-Calumet, Litchfield, Mansfield-et-Pontefract, Otter Lake, Portage-du-Fort, Shawville, Thorne and Waltham. Finally, in the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais, Xplornet will make connections in the municipality of Pontiac.

As for Cogeco, the company will connect households mainly in the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais, more specifically in the municipalities of Chelsea, La Pêche, Val-des-Monts and Pontiac, as well as the municipality of Low in the MRC Vallée-de-la-Gatineau. Note that Bell will be installing and expanding its fibre optic network in the municipalities of Allyn-and-Cawood, Chichester, L'Isle-aux-Allumettes, Sheenboro, Waltham, Cantley, Chelsea, La Pêche, Pontiac, Val-des-Monts, Blue Sea, Bouchette, Cascades-Malignes, Denholm, Grand-Remous, Kazabazua, Lac-Sainte-Marie, Low, Messines and Montcerf-Lytton, as well as the remaining unconnected portions the city of Gatineau.

MP Amos has always maintained that high speed internet services are essential in a modern society. Access to efficient, reliable and affordable Internet services is at the heart of the socio-economic development of communities. As such, the projects funded by the Canada-Quebec High Speed Operation

are a key element in Quebec's digital shift and promote access to telemedicine, distance education, entertainment, online shopping and telecommuting.

Quotes

"The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that it has never been more important to connect all Quebecers to high speed Internet. This is why our government is investing to connect homes and businesses in the Outaouais by fall 2022. With this historic announcement, and thanks to our good collaboration between Canada and Quebec, we are increasing the potential for economic growth. enabling work-from-home, and helping improve the quality of life of all rural residents in the Outaouais. "

- Will Amos, Parliamentary Secretary for Science and MP for Pontiac

"With the pandemic, high speed internet has become essential for our day-to-day operations. The investments announced are unprecedented and it shows to what extent the Government of Quebec is making this file a priority. Reliable and efficient services are a key element of the economic development and vitality of our region. "

- Robert Bussière, MNA for Gatineau

"For Cogeco, this is an unequivocal commitment to the Outaouais region and we are happy to have an even stronger impact in our communities. We are delighted to participate in this large-scale project which will mark the history of Quebec and its citizens in the regions. "

- Johanne Hinse, General Manager for Quebec and Vice-President, Programming and Community Relations, Cogeco,

"Xplornet is proud to have been selected to carry out three distinct projects in the region, which reflects our strong ability to quickly complete large-scale rural projects. We thank the governments of Canada and Quebec for their confidence and we are very anxious to start work in the Outaouais. "

- Charles Beaudet, Vice-President (Quebec), Xplornet

Quick facts

- Operation High Speed will allow Quebec to have the highest connectivity rate in Canada, at 99%.
- The 150,000 or so households that will be connected by the Canada-Quebec High Speed Operation are in addition to the 66,000 households already covered by other programs of the governments of Canada and Quebec.
- The Government of Canada has allocated billions of dollars to Internet infrastructure in rural and remote areas, including \$ 2.75 billion under the Universal Broadband Fund, including \$ 1 billion from the 2021 federal budget.
- So far, the Government of Quebec alone has invested more than \$ 1 billion to accelerate the connection of all Quebecers to high speed Internet by the fall of 2022.
- To reach the goal of optimal connectivity across the province in 2022, there are around 36,000 homes to be served. These homes are located in particularly difficult to access locations and very sparsely populated. Technological solutions are currently being studied and the strategy adopted to reach these homes by 2022 will be announced at a later date.

Information and interviews

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