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Broadband investment for Nunavut’s growth

YELLOWKNIFE - (August 29, 2008)

The Government of Canada announced a \$21,601,175 broadband investment today for Nunavut, based on the 5-year plan, *“Managing Bandwidth - Nunavut’s Road Ahead”* prepared by the Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation (NBDC) earlier this year.

“We are extremely pleased to see the Government of Canada support our plans to see broadband services expanded in Nunavut” said Darrell Ohokannoak, Chairman of NBDC.

The Government of Canada investment will help to stimulate the development of new broadband services as requested by Nunavut broadband users in NBDC’s recent consultation. The investment will also assist in ensuring basic levels of broadband services are available in every community until 2013. The majority of the funds will be used for the purchase of satellite bandwidth over the next five years.

“People need to connect with each other using video, audio and document sharing for training and meetings. With the cost of air travel soaring, many organizations are looking to broadband to help them make the best use of time and money, and these kinds of online meetings need lots of bandwidth,” added Mr. Ohokannoak.

Working with the Government of Nunavut, NBDC will be asking broadband vendors in Nunavut to propose new, efficient ways for Nunavut organizations to connect effectively with video and audio, transfer large files for education, health, business, and resource management.

Since 2003, NBDC has successfully managed over \$16,000,000 of investment. At the community level there are 25 Community Service Providers in Nunavut, earning significant revenue in commission payments for providing QINIQ services in each community. NBDC aims to see an increase in this local investment and capacity building with the expansion of broadband services.

NBDC cannot use the federal funds to finance NBDC’s ongoing operations, and will depend on other investors to support its publicly mandated services that ensures people can obtain affordable broadband in every Nunavut community, while ensuring local economies benefit directly from broadband.

Secretary-Treasurer for NBDC, Lorraine Thomas, said, “We hope to attract other long-term public investment to cover our organizational costs, so that we can hire permanent staff based in Iqaluit.”



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Currently, NBDC receives \$200,000 of core funding each year from the Government of Nunavut Department of Economic Development (GN EDT). These core funds, along with project-based funding from both GN EDT and Indian and Northern Affairs (INAC) allowed NBDC to make the case for the \$21 million dollar federal investment.

NBDC is a not-for-profit corporation set up in 2003 to ensure the provision of affordable broadband access in every Nunavut community, provided by the private sector, with economic development at the community level as a primary objective. The NBDC board consists of seven volunteer directors elected by the NBDC members, a director appointed by the Minister of Economic Development and Transportation, Government of Nunavut and a director appointed by Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated.

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To arrange interviews with NBDC board or staff, please contact:

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