

SWIFT Announces Major Fibre Projects in Lambton County

- SWIFT signs agreements with Execulink Telecom Inc. (Execulink Telecom) and Cogeco Connexions Inc. (Cogeco Connexions) to support four large-scale fibre projects to deliver faster internet speeds in Lambton Shores, the Town of Plympton-Wyoming, St. Clair Township, and Kettle and Stony Point First Nation.
- More than 3,900 households and businesses will soon have access to gigabit services.
- The broadband infrastructure projects are collectively valued at approximately \$11.4 million.

SWIFT today announced it has awarded contracts to expand high-speed fibre-optic broadband services to more than 3,900 households and businesses across 17 communities within Lambton County, including Kettle and Stony Point First Nation.

"In today's digital age, internet connectivity is essential to the economic stability of our region. With connectivity comes opportunities. Increased access to online services and resources enable our rural communities to continue to grow and thrive," says David Mayberry, SWIFT Board Chair. "That is why we are pleased to announce that many more residents within the county and First Nation will soon have access to reliable and affordable broadband services."

SWIFT has awarded \$6.5 million in provincial and federal funding to support Execulink Telecom and Cogeco Connexions on four new fibre-to-the-home projects to improve access to broadband services within the region. The total value of the newly announced projects is approximately \$11.4 million, including \$4.9 million in contributions from the service providers.

"The advancement of these projects will have a very positive impact all across Lambton County," says Bill Weber, Lambton County Warden and SWIFT Board Member. "We are pleased to be a part of the initial projects, and the increased access to high-speed broadband services in Lambton County will benefit many of our residents and businesses in the near future."

Execulink Telecom will receive funding for two projects to deploy fibre along more than 127 kilometres of underserved roads in Lambton Shores and Plympton-Wyoming, including the communities of Ravenswood, Gustin Grove, Cedar Point, Glendale Beach, Hillsborough Beach and Highland Glen, as well as in Springvale, Jericho, Jura, providing service to much of the rural portion of former Bosanquet Township. The estimated total cost to install infrastructure to service more than 1,190 homes, businesses and buildings of public interest within the communities is approximately \$3.8 million with a project completion date slated for the end of 2021.

Funding has also been awarded to Execulink Telecom for a community-wide fibre project in Kettle and Stony Point First Nation. The total project cost is approximately \$2.7 million and will require the service provider to install fibre-optic lines along 35 kilometres of road to deliver a fibre-to-the-home solution. The newly announced project is a first-of-

its-kind for the community, which up until now relied on particularly poor internet service, with some areas still dependent on dial-up connectivity. The network is expected to be up and running by the end of 2020 with direct fibre connections available to approximately 900 homes and businesses within the First Nation, as well as to nearly 130 homes and businesses in the surrounding area.

"We welcome the introduction of fibre optic infrastructure, which will bring high-speed internet to our community", says Chippewas of Kettle and Stony Point Chief Jason Henry. "This investment is a game-changer for our community that will open the door to economic and educational opportunities widely available elsewhere and improve quality of life for residents."

"Execulink Telecom is proud to participate in the SWIFT broadband initiative. We understand how essential it is to deliver fast, affordable and reliable broadband services to homes and businesses in underserved rural communities," says Ian Stevens, President and CEO, Execulink Telecom. "Partnering with SWIFT will allow us to successfully contribute to community and economic growth, within select areas that are in need of a more advanced technological experience. We look forward to expanding our fibre footprint in the communities of Bosanquet, Kettle Point and the Lambton Shores lakeshore area."

SWIFT will also award funding to Cogeco Connexions to service more than 80 kilometres of underserved roads in St. Claire to provide faster and more reliable services to the people of Babys Point, Port Lambton, Sombra, Wilkesport, Avonry, Mooretown and Brigden at an estimated total cost of \$4.9 million. The project is scheduled to provide fibre broadband services to more than 1,700 rural residences and businesses by the end of 2021.

"Expanding our network into high-potential markets like Lambton County is a business priority for us," said Antoine Shiu, Vice President, Business Solutions and Market Expansion at Cogeco Connexion. "We are honoured to have been selected by SWIFT to move ahead with the rollout of our proposed expansion in the townships of Babys Point, Port Lambton, Sombra, Wilkesport, Avonry, Mooretown, and Brigden. Thanks to the latest technologies and continued investments, this project will provide the people of Lambton County with access to our superior high-speed internet products - as well as significantly help the Government of Ontario bridge the current connectivity gap in the province."

SWIFT is making the investments through the New Building Canada Fund - Small Communities Fund (NBCF-SCF), a joint federal and provincial infrastructure funding program, and in partnership with its member municipalities.

"The broadband infrastructure investments we are making will significantly boost internet speeds and support the digital needs of families and businesses across Lambton County and within Kettle and Stony Point First Nation both today and into the future," says Barry Field, SWIFT Executive Director. "SWIFT is proud of the relationships we have established with our partners and community leaders and look forward to continuing to deliver on our commitment to increase access to

high-speed services across Southwestern Ontario."

Today's newly announced projects will deliver internet speed up to 1 gigabit per second and are part of the SWIFT \$209 million Southwestern Ontario broadband expansion plan.

About SWIFT

Southwestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) is a non-profit regional broadband project initiated by the [Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus](#) to subsidize the construction of high-speed broadband networks across Southwestern Ontario, Caledon and the Niagara Region.

The project was approved for funding up to \$127.4 million under the New Building Canada Fund - Small Communities Fund (NBCF-SCF), a joint federal and provincial infrastructure funding program, and leverages additional funding from municipal partners and private sector investors to bring the total project investment to \$209 million to improve access to broadband services across the region.

For more information about SWIFT, please visit www.swiftruralbroadband.ca.

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