

Monica Hawkins

Subject: FW: Broadband funding briefing
Attachments: Letter - Blue Sky Network.docx

From: Pauline Rochefort <paulinerochefort17@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2019 4:02 PM
To: Monica Hawkins <monica.hawkins@eastferris.ca>
Cc: Jason Trottier <jason.trottier@eastferris.ca>
Subject: Fwd: Broadband funding briefing

Bonjour Monique,

See attached letter to include in our next Council meeting correspondence.
Pauline Rochefort

----- Forwarded message -----

From: Susan Church <susan.church@blueskyregion.ca>
Date: Tue, 4 Jun 2019 at 14:20
Subject: Broadband funding briefing
To:

Dear Mayor and Council members,

I wanted to take this time to reacquaint some of you with Blue Sky Economic Growth Corporation (Blue Sky Net) and to provide a briefing to those of you who may not be aware of the work we do on your behalf.

Blue Sky Economic Growth Corporation, with a specific focus on technology development, is a non-profit corporation funded 100% by FedNor. Incorporated since 2002, our specific role for the last 10 years has shifted to Broadband expansion and technology development in our service delivery area which spans west to the Algoma District, south to Novar, east to Papineau-Cameron and north to Temagami. FedNor funds four other similar organizations across Northern Ontario.

One of our major projects over the last five years has been to develop a GIS mapping system of all Broadband in Northern Ontario. Using the Ontario MPAC Parcel as our base layer and matching information provided by all Internet Service Providers (ISP's) who own networks, we know specifically what internet speed and capacity is available right down to each registered property parcel.

Working with you, we use this information to develop funding applications for various government programs but also to ensure that municipalities are shown to be eligible for these various programs when sometimes, government Intel doesn't have it quite right. We also use it to help municipal governments understand the need for Broadband in their community and essentially provide a snapshot of where you stand.

We also maintain a public portal of broadband information which can be found at www.connectednorth.ca. This website provides information for your residents and businesses to see what internet connections are available as well as offer opportunities to run speed tests so that we can accurately see what speeds are really being used in any

community in Northern Ontario. We use this information to prepare for funding programs so that we can prove eligibility. Also, there is information to help guide users through the very complex nature of technology.

Our focus is to facilitate network expansion by helping to bring all levels of government together with one strategic goal and that is to resolve the ever growing need for Broadband in your community so that we can all be on that level playing field to grow our communities.

We have worked over the past few years to deliver on that plan by working with a number of ISP's such as Bell, Net Spectrum, Vianet, CORE Broadband and Rogers. We have applied for and received approval for over 35 million dollars from a number of funding programs through ISED, NOHFC, OMAFRA and others. Sometimes we are the proponent and sometimes we simply prepare and facilitate the project for the ISP's. Other times, we just bring together the right people to work out a plan that doesn't necessarily involve going to other levels of government for funding to come up with solutions for improving broadband access.

It is not easy to expand broadband networks and if money was not an object, everyone would have a lightning fast, reliable connection. However, we depend on government to support these expansions. Low population density is the culprit because ISP's still have to be able to turn a profit and the expense of building and maintaining broadband networks doesn't make it possible in rural areas.

For a long time now, the Federal government and the Provincial government have not been on the same page at the same time. In most Broadband builds, the costs are broken down by thirds, with both levels of government and the ISP sharing that cost. We have not seen new Broadband projects approved for this area in a very long time.

We are hopeful that is soon to change. The CRTC is set to announce their National Broadband Fund, in fact they have just announced the first round of intake for far North projects that will serve the Yukon, Northwest Territories, Nunavut and satellite dependent communities. We hope to hear shortly about the Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure details recently announced in the Provincial budget. So, what does this mean to you?

We need to be certain that Northern Ontario gets their share of any new funding that is announced and we have to be ready to submit applications as soon as funding envelopes open up.

I would be pleased to chat with you about some of the most recent Broadband projects we have been looking to facilitate. In many cases, the funding was available with one level of government, but not the other and therefore the projects have not proceeded.

As we begin to ramp up for the expected National Broadband strategy that is due out very soon, I hope we can all work together to ensure that our voice in the North is heard and that we all work together to try and deliver the access to Broadband we all deserve.

My staff and I are always happy to meet with your Council to bring you information that we hope you will find useful. We can easily provide a snapshot of Broadband services in your community and most importantly I hope we can all work together to support our common goals.

As we move forward with project funding applications, we will be coming to you for resolutions of support. I do look forward to meeting with you in the future and if at any time you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call upon me. I do hope that you will take a look at our website at www.blueskynet.ca to see what else we can help you with.

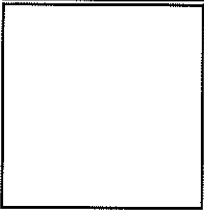
On another matter, we hope to hear soon if funding will be approved for another round of programs that help our businesses with technology. We send out a newsletter every month to your EDO's and clerks, so do check to see if they have the latest issue of TECHTALK. We have just recently added you to our mailing list.

Best personal regards,

Susan Church

--

Susan Church
Executive Director
Blue Sky Economic Growth Corporation
102-150 First Ave. West
North Bay, ON P1B 3B9
tel:(705) 476-0874 ext. 211
fax:(705) 223-3696
susan.church@blueskyregion.ca



The information transmitted is intended only for the person or entity to which it is addressed and may contain confidential and/or privileged material. Any review, retransmission, dissemination or other use of, or taking of any action in reliance upon, this information by persons or entities other than the intended recipient is prohibit