



Grand Council Treaty #3

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MEDIA RELEASE

February 22, 2024

Grand Council Treaty #3 Dibaajimowin Project Releases Fibre Optic Internet Services to First Nations

Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh and Grand Council Treaty #3 are pleased to announce the release of high speed fibre optic broadband internet services in the first four Treaty #3 First Nations to be served by the Dibaajimowin Project. Residents and businesses in Naicatchewenin First Nation, Wauzhushk Onigum Nation, Couchiching First Nation and Wabauskang First Nation now have access to high-speed internet through the option of ordering gold standard fibre optic internet services.

The Dibaajimowin Project is bringing high-speed fibre optic internet access to Treaty #3 First Nations and is a collaborative effort between the Chiefs and leadership of the Treaty #3 First Nations, Grand Council Treaty #3, Bell Canada and the provincial and federal governments. Funding commitments of \$12.3 million from the Government of Ontario's Improving Connectivity for Ontario program and \$36.9 million from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada Universal Broadband Fund program were received in late July 2021. The project is well underway with a construction schedule that will see a further 17 First Nations and 13 non-Indigenous communities in the Treaty #3 Territory connected with high-speed internet access by the end of 2025.

"The release of high-speed fibre optic broadband to the first four First Nations in Treaty #3 reflects the shared commitment between the Anishinaabe Nation of Treaty #3 and funding partners to empowering the Anishinaabe people to thrive within a digital landscape," said Ogichidaa Francis Kavanaugh.

Chief Skead from Wauzhushk Onigum Nation is pleased to have the option of high-speed fibre optic internet in his community and added, "the introduction of high-speed fibre optic is a transformative milestone for our community, unlocking new opportunities and fostering greater connectivity for our Nation."

High-speed broadband connectivity in First Nation communities has an important role in leveling the playing field for residents. Opportunities for distance education, economic development, including web-based businesses are all positively impacted with reliable high-speed internet access. Staying connected to family and friends at a distance and receiving health services in the community through digital health and telemedicine are all possible with high-speed fibre optic service.

QUOTES FROM PARTNERS:

"Bell is very pleased to bring fibre broadband connectivity to residents and businesses in Naicatchewenin First Nation, Wauzhushk Onigum Nation, Couchiching First Nation and Wabauskang First Nation. We're proud of our partnership with Grand Council Treaty #3 and the federal and provincial governments to expand access to high-speed internet in Treaty #3 First Nations." - *Dejan Mancic, VP Wireline Access, Bell*

“In today’s world, we all know that the internet is no longer a luxury—it's an essential tool to access education, health care, and grow a business. That’s why the Government of Canada has made a historic commitment to connect 98% of Canadians to high-speed Internet by 2026. This investment will increase access to good quality Internet for over 3,800 households in Treaty #3 Territory, of which more than 2,300 are Indigenous.” – *The Honourable Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency*

“The Ontario government is bringing access to reliable high-speed internet to every community across the province by the end of 2025. Our government is proud to announce that Naicatchewenin First Nation, Wauzhushk Onigum Nation, Couchiching First Nation and Wabauskang First Nation will now have access to reliable high-speed internet to learn, work, access important health care services, and stay connected with friends and loved ones. This is part of an investment that will bring high-speed internet access to 3,800 households in the Treaty #3 Territory, of which more than 2,300 are Indigenous.” - *The Honourable Kinga Surma, Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure*

"The Rainy River Future Development Corporation is pleased to support the Dibaajimowin project which will provide fibre optic services to GCT3 First Nations and adjacent communities." - *Jeff Wiume, Chair, Rainy River Future Development Corporation*

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