



## First Nation Communities in Southwestern Ontario Call for Better Broadband

Beausoleil First Nation, Kettle and Stony Point First Nation, Saugeen First Nation, and Six Nations of the Grand River have become members of SouthWestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT). These valuable additions mean that SWIFT now represents the combined connectivity interests of over 1,500 member locations including First Nations, municipalities, hospitals, schools, school boards, and other large public and private enterprises across the region.

"With the advancement and prevalence of cloud computing in both the public and private sectors, it is imperative that highly available and reliable broadband internet be made ready and accessible to all First Nations communities," said Kevin Jackson, Chief Information Officer at Kettle and Stony Point First Nation. "Broadband connectivity spurs innovation and entrepreneurship. It is key in community safety. With fibre connections in place on a First Nation, business opportunities that were previously unavailable become a reality. High speed Internet is a must have if we are to move forward into a global economy."

To overcome the region's longstanding broadband infrastructure gaps, SWIFT is funding the construction of an affordable, open-access, ultra-high-speed fibre-optic regional broadband network in Southwestern Ontario, Caledon and the Niagara Region. The first phase of the project is investing nearly \$300 million in fibre-optic broadband infrastructure. It is the largest publicly funded, regional broadband initiative in Canada to date.

"Beausoleil First Nation is excited to become a member of the SWIFT Network," said Georgia Monague, Community Economic Development Officer at Beausoleil First Nation. "We are looking forward to improving our current broadband capabilities to better serve our growing Island community and experiencing true high-speed internet. Improving our connectivity will indeed bring us up to speed with today's ever-changing technology."

"Broadband costs have been a major concern for us," said Rob Skye, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Manager at Saugeen First Nation. "Although Saugeen First Nation is one of the earliest First Nations Communities to have a Fibre-to-the-Home (FTTH) network installed, the broadband costs are so high in rural areas that it limits the number of individuals that can feasibly connect to the network. We became a member of SWIFT to help us reduce these costs so that we can pass these savings on to our community members and expand our Fibre Network."

"As the most populated First Nation in the country, with over 14,000 members residing on the Territory, Six Nations Elected Council has joined the SWIFT Network to connect our community with surrounding communities and the rest of the world," said Six Nations Senior Administrative Officer,

Dayle Bomberry. "Becoming a member of SWIFT will help to ensure that Six Nations stays connected and up-to-date in the progressive digital world we live in today."

"We are honoured to have four First Nation communities join the SWIFT initiative," said Gerry Marshall, Board Chair at SWIFT. "By working together to create a fully integrated fibre optic broadband network, we will ensure that all First Nations are able to participate in the digital economy and access advanced education, health care and social services."

"Many of Ontario's First Nation communities are still facing infrastructure barriers when it comes to Internet connectivity and broadband access," said Geoff Hogan, Chief Executive Officer at SWIFT. "To ensure that all Ontarians are well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by the digital age, it is important that the province of Ontario continues to invest in building this critical infrastructure until everyone is connected to an ultra-high speed, fibre optic broadband network."

### **About the SWIFT Initiative**

SouthWestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) is a not-for-profit, collective broadband initiative that is funding the construction of an affordable, open-access, ultra-high-speed fibre-optic regional broadband network for everyone in Southwestern Ontario, Caledon and the Niagara Region. The project is leveraging \$180 million in combined investments by the federal and provincial governments and over \$17 million in investments by municipalities across the region. To overcome our region's longstanding broadband infrastructure gaps, SWIFT has developed a long-term plan to help more than 3.5 million Ontarians to connect and keep pace in a changing digital world. SWIFT membership is open to any community or organization in southwestern Ontario that needs connectivity to any of its locations. Members benefit from SWIFT's significant procurement expertise, including aggregated demand, negotiated rates, and support in preparing RFPs for broadband services. As a buying group, SWIFT also ensures greater competition between telecom service providers which will lead to better services at lower prices in member communities.

Help SWIFT build "broadband for everyone" by completing our Internet usage survey:

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