
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Citizens' Services

ROUND TWO GRANTS PROGRAM HELPS BRIDGE DIGITAL DIVIDE

VICTORIA – The Province is providing \$1.5 million for Round Two of the Connecting Citizens Grant Program, to assist in bringing Internet service to citizens in rural and remote British Columbia locales announced Citizens' Services Minister Ben Stewart.

“The latest round of the Connecting Citizens Grant Program supports our commitment to bridging the digital divide in British Columbia,” said Stewart. “Broadband access is important for citizens in all corners of the province to share in health, education and economic opportunities.”

Under Network BC, grants are available to eligible applicants where expanding Internet service to unconnected areas can be demonstrated.

The Connecting Citizens Grant Program was announced on Sept. 26, 2008 by Premier Gordon Campbell at the annual Union of B.C. Municipalities convention. This is a multi-year grant program providing up to \$50,000 per locale. The funding helps pay for local infrastructure required to connect homes and businesses to the Internet.

“With 92 per cent of our citizens having access to high-speed Internet, British Columbia is one of the most connected provinces in Canada,” said Stewart. “Every British Columbian should have the opportunity to access high-speed Internet services, and today we are one step closer to making this a reality.”

Round One was completed in March 2009 and resulted in much needed last-mile infrastructure funding to 67 Internet projects in over 100 locales.

“This program is so important in helping to bring connectivity into our community,” said Andrew Hofmann of San Juan Enterprises in Port Renfrew, which received funding through the first round of the Connecting Citizens Grant Program. “We are extremely pleased with today’s funding announcement. The work that we’ve been able to do bring high-speed Internet to Port Renfrew would not get done without the support of Network BC.”

As part of the Ministry of Citizens' Services, Network BC focuses on the strategic use of telecommunications, including increasing broadband connectivity for citizens and businesses in rural and remote areas of British Columbia.

For more information on the Connecting Citizens Grant Program or to access the application package, visit: <http://www.network.gov.bc.ca/>

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