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Ministry of Community Services  
Ministry of Economic Development  
Western Economic Diversification Canada

## **IMPROVED INTERNET ACCESS FOR KOOTENAY COMMUNITIES**

NAKUSP – A federal and provincial investment of more than \$47,000 will improve broadband service and provide Burton, Edgewood and Fauquier residents with expanded access to high-speed Internet. The funding is available through the Canada-B.C. Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CBCMRIF), which enables communities across B.C. to become healthier, greener and more sustainable places to live.

The announcement was made today by the Honourable Jim Abbott, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Member of Parliament for Kootenay-Columbia, on behalf of the Honourable Rona Ambrose, President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, and on behalf of Ida Chong, B.C.’s Minister of Community Services.

“Working to develop broadband capabilities is vital to help create new opportunities for social and economic development in these regions,” said Abbott. “The Government of Canada is proud to partner with the Province of British Columbia to make long-term infrastructure improvements in Burton, Edgewood and Fauquier.”

“Communication is vital to the sustainability of a community,” said Chong. “We’re pleased that through this funding partnership we are able to support Kootenay area residents with this type of infrastructure that makes a real difference in people’s lives.”

Burton and Edgewood will receive more than \$32,000 to improve and expand broadband access for current Internet users. This will connect residents, schools, businesses, community groups and local emergency services in the region. Meanwhile, Fauquier will receive \$15,000 to increase the capacity of its wireless Internet system, including access at the ferry terminal and on the ferry.

“High-speed Internet is crucial to the economic well-being of business owners, tourism operators, farmers, forest services, and health-care providers, as well as students and educators. It improves the knowledge of our workforce, promotes equal access and fosters innovation,” said Jean Bassett, chair of the Edgewood Community Internet Association. “We are very grateful to be receiving support from the federal and provincial government.”

“This project will enable the Fauquier community to provide broadband Internet service to residents that presently unable to access the internet due to distance and terrain issues,” said Peter Klopp, project manager for the Fauquier Communication Centre Society.

“The Burton Community Broadband is delighted to be able to expand our project as a result of funding from the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund,” said Rosalie Cranna, vice-president of the Burton Community Hall Association. “We intend to upgrade our solar site, develop a community access site and extend our service as far as Arrow Park.”

The majority of the program funding from the CBCMRIF, which was launched in June 2006, supports communities of fewer than 250,000 people in minimizing the costs to taxpayers of local infrastructure upgrades or new construction projects.

At least 60 per cent of the funding will assist with “green projects” that are geared towards enhancing environmental sustainability, such as water and waste-water systems, public transit and environmental energy improvements. Other infrastructure projects will support local roads, cultural and recreational facilities, tourism and broadband connectivity. The funding for this project is conditionally approved pending the successful completion of an environmental assessment.

The total amount available through the CBCMRIF, with federal and provincial investments and matching local government contribution, is over \$220 million. More details on the program are available online at [www.canadabcmrif.ca](http://www.canadabcmrif.ca).

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