



PRESS RELEASE

The NICSN and the KRG announce enhanced broadband access for northern Manitoba, northern Ontario and Nunavik

Kuujuaq, Québec – October 15, 2008 – This week the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) and several partners celebrated the launch of enhanced satellite telecommunication services for the remote communities in Nunavik, northern Ontario and northern Manitoba. The enhanced services represent the successful implementation of commitments made by the governments of Canada and Québec at the Katimajit Conference held in Nunavik in August 2007. This week's celebrations included three main components.

First, the KRG, Keewatinook Okimakanak and the Keewatin Tribal Council strengthened their partnership under the Northern Indigenous Community Satellite Network (NICSN) with the announcement of a joint venture agreement. The agreement formalizes a partnership, which has existed since 2004. And it importantly permits the NICSN to access \$24.6 million in funding for broadband services via satellite under Infrastructure Canada's National Satellite Initiative, the Québec government's *Villages branchés* program, and the Ontario government's Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.

KRG Chairperson Maggie Emudluk noted, "The extra bandwidth being purchased with this funding will enable an enhanced range of applications, including videoconferencing, access to more online educational programs for our youth, the possibility for health professionals to carry out patient consultations, the delivery of governmental services, the promotion of Inuit culture and language, and greater dialogue between youth and others in Nunavik, in Québec and throughout the world." Geordi Kakepetum represented Keewatinook Okimakanak at the Kuujuaq celebrations via videoconference from Balmertown, northern Ontario. Sharon McKay of the Keewatin Tribal Council was also present via videoconference from Thompson, northern Manitoba.

The NICSN, which serves 45 remote communities in Nunavik, northern Ontario and northern Manitoba, has two main objectives. It allows its three partners to pool their resources for greater efficiency and jointly manage their network. It also makes it possible for the three partners to access public- and private-sector support for which each would never qualify separately.

Also at the KRG celebrations this week, the NICSN and Telesat formally announced a new long-term service agreement for C-band capacity on Telesat's Anik F3 satellite. Telesat has played a significant role in the NICSN since its inception and is a major financial contributor to the current project's success.

The final component of the Kuujuaq celebrations was the signing of memorandums of understanding between the KRG and both the Kativik School Board (KSB) and the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS). The KSB undertook to work towards continuing to contract from the KRG's Tamaani Nunavik Wireless Internet the related services

required for its schools and administrative offices across the region, including much-needed videoconferencing capacity. For its part, the NRBHSS was welcomed as a new regional participant in Tamaani. This participation will permit the delivery, in particular, of specialized tele-health services at Nunavik's health centres in Puvirnituk and Kuujuaq, as well as at the CLSCs in the region's 12 other communities. This tangible sign of cooperation between Nunavik's three main public institutions augurs well for the future Nunavik regional government.

The KRG is a non-ethnic public organization created in 1978, under the James Bay and Northern Québec Agreement. The organization has jurisdiction over nearly the entire territory of Québec north of the 55th parallel. The KRG administers public affairs in Nunavik in the areas of municipal matters, transportation, the environment, policing, employment, labour training, income security, childcare services, renewable resources, land-use management, civil security and economic development.

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Source:

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