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Broadband plan moves forward

IQALUIT, NU May 28, 2003 -- The Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation has selected Yellowknife-based SSI Micro and its Nunavut partners – Polarnet, Sakku Arctic Technologies, and Nunanet Communications, plus Sanny Internet Services in Sanikiluaq to work with NBDC to prepare its final business plan that aims to provide affordable broadband (high speed Internet) access to all 25 Nunavut communities.

An independent review committee reporting to the advisory group of the NBDC evaluated a series of proposals answering an RFP issued by NBDC last March. Six companies submitted bids to provide satellite services – connecting community to community via satellite. Four companies submitted bids to provide community broadband services – connecting the community to the satellite earth station (also called ‘the last mile’.)

Each proposal was carefully evaluated on price, scalability, community impact and economic development potential.

“SSI Micro’s satellite bid was a technically efficient solution, that provides us with a network that can grow to meet Nunavut’s needs – at a good price. At the same time, its partnerships for last mile delivery with Polarnet, Sakku, and Nunanet provide a strong case for meeting our objectives of economic and community development,” said Lorraine Thomas, Project Manager for the development of the NBDC business plan.

Clare Basler of Kitikmeot Corporation and Polarnet is a founding member of the NBDC. “Our plan provides Nunavut residents with affordable access to an inexpensive road – an electronic road connecting all of our communities. Our broadband road will ensure that our businesses, organizations and community members can work, study, and build our territory to meet our needs. Broadband is critical to the future of Nunavut.”

According to the NBDC plan, satellite services would be delivered through SSI Micro into all Nunavut communities, regardless of population. Last mile services would be delivered through SSI Micro and its regional partners through wireless technology. In communities where regional partners are not providing services, local ISPs are invited to work with either the regional partner or directly with SSI Micro if interested.

NBDC will be submitting a business plan to Industry Canada on June 6th, 2003. Industry Canada will not announce which business plans will be funded until as late as February 2004. If NBDC is successful in obtaining the necessary funds to bring broadband to all communities of Nunavut, services would start to roll out in the summer of 2004.

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