

Blue Sky News



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

Nov. 5, 2003

Blue Sky Region receives \$1 million for broadband Internet service

CORBEIL– Nipissing District MP Bob Wood announced on Oct. 15th that the Blue Sky Region Community Network (BSRCN) would receive assistance from Industry Canada to deploy high-capacity Internet to approximately 57 unserved communities in and around the Blue Sky Region.

BSRCN working as the regional Community-Based Network for the Blue Sky Region received the funding through the Broadband for Rural and Northern Development (BRAND) pilot project. BSRCN was one of only 33 groups nationally to secure funding.

“This is a tremendous opportunity that will enable economic diversification and life long learning for all inhabitants,” said Scott Mannering Technology Sector Chair. “The process was extremely competitive, the reason why we were successful was because our communities, private industries and citizens formed a cohesive group with a common goal,” he continued when asked how difficult to secure this funding.



Susan Church, Helen McDonnell, Rick Hansen and Donna Bourne-Tyson at the BRAND announcement.

Broadband is defined as high-capacity Internet access that is capable of supporting real-time audio and video functions. It is a “pipeline” that delivers services in areas like health, education and business within easy reach of all Canadians.

“Broadband access removes the geographic disadvantages that many rural, remote and First Nations Communities currently face. From online learning and e-business to tele-health and online service delivery, this technology opens doors,” said James Knight, Chief Executive Officer, Federation of Canadian Municipalities in an Industry Canada News Release.

BRAND is one of several programs within recent years that is aimed at improving connectivity throughout more remote areas of the Province and Canada.

Please see related stories/ P3

Mining Sector Chair honoured

Tom Palangio knows how to blow things up. His resume shows over 25 years of experience with explosives starting with DuPont of Canada in the mid 1970's. In 1994 he formed Topex Inc. an independent explosive consulting firm catering to the mining, quarry and construction industries.

His experience has lead him around the world consulting with different mining and quarrying companies. In fact, many of the top companies in the industry have called on Topex Inc. for assistance. Tom's expertise in planning, blasting and monitoring is what garnered him the title of “Entrepreneur of the Year” at the Northern Ontario Business Awards in Thunder Bay recently. Tom's award was one of three honours given to mining and mining supply companies located within the Blue Sky Region.

Please see Palangio/ P2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

BSEGC marks first year of incorporation	2
Forestry committee; a busy group	2
Award will bolster Region's business	2
Many recent projects aimed at connectivity	3
BSEGC responsible for project delivery	3
Trivia answers	4
Meeting highlights	4

BLUE SKY AUTUMN TRIVIA

1. The autumnal tradition of setting clocks back is observed in the Region as it is in the rest of Northern Ontario. What is the purpose of daylight savings time, and when did it start?

2. In the months of Sept. Oct. and Nov., how many days, on average, can we expect temperatures to be 0°C or less in the Blue Sky Region?

- A) 9
- B) 39
- C) 59

3. With autumn comes the task of raking fallen leaves. The Blue Sky Region is part a very diverse forestry zone. Within this zone, how many species of trees are there?

- A) 17-32
- B) 33-64
- C) 65-95

Answers on P4

BSEGC marks first anniversary

Blue Sky Economic Growth Corporation marked a milestone on October 25, 2003. As Ontario Corporation Number 1544727, BSEGC is officially one-year-old.

The Blue Sky Initiative has been in existence as a Regional Economic Partnership since the early 90's formed out of the recognition that the overall economic attributes of the Region embody significant strengths that cannot be realized by individuals, communities, groups or companies acting on their own. BSEGC has completed its annual report for year one, listing several of the projects it has been involved in over the last twelve months. Some of these projects include; The North Bay Nugget's "Communities 2003" report. This was a 2-section insert published based on the BSEGC model of economic development and featured stories about each sector and current initiatives. Also, it details some of the many partnerships BSEGC has entered into since incorporation.

At BSEGC October 23 Board of Directors Meeting, the Board resolved that in view of the completion of the first year of operation as a new corporation, the Executive committee of BSEGC would meet prior to the next Board meeting to review Board appointments, committee responsibilities and the terms of Corporate By-Law #1.

"This is an attempt to remain current and focused" GM Susan Church said. "As a progressive and functional corporation, we must regularly assess what we are doing, and if its not working, it's our job to fix it" she concluded.



Mattawa and Area Forestry Committee has a busy schedule

The Mattawa and Area Forestry Committee for Economic Development (MAFCED), a long time supporter and contributor to BSEGC, may make a few big changes. Recently, MAFCED has accepted the task of stewardship of the Mattawa and Bonfield Area's Strategic Planning Committee's document "Charting the Voyager Trail."

"The MAFCED will be undergoing a review of its mission statement, its bylaws, its membership and, perhaps, even its name" said Chair Sandra Smyth in a report to BSEGC.

"Charting the Voyager Trail" is a concise strategic planning document that lists over 20 'opportunities' the area can pursue from expanding the ATV/Multi-use Trail Network to lobbying to keep their local high school open. With so many projects on the go, one of their priorities is to establish a permanent economic development office with administrative support.

MAFCED is currently overseeing several other projects: One such activity is the "Experience Downtown Mattawa" and "Business Section" signage campaign is aimed at travelers who would normally bypass downtown Mattawa while driving east or west on Hwy 17. As a regional agency, the MAFCED wants to expand this branding signage program to the outlying areas to encourage traffic off the highway down to Bonfield, Eau Claire and other communities off the beaten path. The MAFCED is also a large supporter of many of the initiatives taking place at the Canadian Ecology Centre. The CEC will play host to educators in late November for a professional development program called "Technology and Fun in the Forrest."

Palangio hopes award will benefit the Region

Tom also sits on the Board of Directors to BSEGC as the Mining Cluster Chair.

"I've been a proponent of encouraging business for a long time because I think jobs and community mutually benefit from this activity." He said of the Blue Sky initiative. Not only does Tom recognize this award as a honour and testament to his hard work, but also beneficial to the entire Region.

"Hopefully our success will encourage others to start businesses in the Region and result in more economic prosperity."

The mining industry employs over 2000 people (directly and through associated companies) in North Bay alone.

The other area companies who received recognition at the NOBAs were; Millar Technology Inc- Company of the Year (16-50 employees) and Atlas Copco- Company of the Year (51+ employees).

Go to www.noba.ca/winners/default.html to find out more about all NOBA winners.



Blue Sky Mining Cluster Chair and Entrepreneur of the Year; Tom Palangio

BRAND only one of many projects aimed at increasing connectivity

The benefits in living in the Blue Sky Region remain too many to list in such a short space. Yet the limitations are somewhat more obvious. Relative isolation geographically has always been a problem for northern communities. In the 21st century, this isolation is also felt when cell phones no longer ring or when there's gridlock on the onramp to the information superhighway.

The Blue Sky Region Community Network has undertaken several projects to expand connectivity in the Region. The announcement that the group received funding from the Broadband for Rural and Northern Development (BRAND) pilot project is only one from a list of many projects that this group has championed.

BSRCN has been a lead partner in the Federal Government's Community Access Program (CAP) initiative that gives thousands of Canadians affordable access to the Internet in places like schools, community centres and libraries. BSRCN has also taken over for NipNet to establish Blue Sky Net which acts as our Community Based Network (CBN).

The BRAND pilot is intended to increase Broadband access to unserved areas by 2005. By Industry Canada's definition, unserved areas are those without any broadband access whatsoever. Similarly, BSRCN is also pursuing funding from the Provincial Government to fill gaps in under-served areas; those obviously being areas that have limited access. The combination of these two programs would mean nearly one hundred percent access to broadband Internet for all residents in the Blue Sky Region. Yet another venture by the group is a cellular service assessment and expansion project. Many areas of the Region are in cellular "black holes", specifically highways 63 and 656.

Some businesses are hesitant to relocate to the area without cellular telecommunications. Existing businesses do not have access to all the communications tools that are available elsewhere and that lever a competitive edge. The safety of the motoring public and tourists is compromised by the unavailability of a "lifeline". Youth and professionals see a deficiency that contributes to their decisions to relocate.

Improving Blue Sky Regions connectivity will give businesses and individuals alike the same advantage that many more "urban" areas have enjoyed for years.



BSEGC responsible for project delivery

The Blue Sky Region Community Network will be handing over the responsibility of delivering the implementation of the BRAND project to Blue Sky Economic Growth Corporation.

BSRCN Chair, Helen McDonnell, explains that the Blue Sky Net Project was initiated by a steering committee made up of Blue Sky Region Community Network (BSRCN) members, as well as other interested community members, including members of the now incorporated BSEGC.

"It was decided that the BSRCN would be the lead applicant since we were already incorporated and our members represented all areas of the Blue Sky Region. However, since the BSRCN has no paid staff we feel that it is in the best interest of the project and the people of the Blue Sky Region that this project should be handed over to the BSEGC. The BSEGC has the qualified personnel to give the project the time and expertise that will be required to manage it well." McDonnell said.

"BSEGC agreeing to take on this project will give it the time and leadership needed to complete it to everyone's satisfaction."

BSEGC General Manager, Susan Church, is pleased to have the opportunity: "Looking at the big picture, this is huge. Historically connectivity has been the main obstacle, for one reason or another, that has slowed northern development. To be the organization responsible to deliver this project is very exciting."

Historically connectivity has been the main obstacle, for one reason or another, that has slowed northern development.

Blue Sky Economic Growth Corporation

Suite 350, 222 McIntyre Street West
North Bay, ON
P1B 2Y8

Phone: 705.476.0874
Fax: 705.495.6038

*Mobilizing the region
with a shared
economic vision*

Visit us on the web!
www.blueskyegc.ca



Blue Sky News
A division of Blue Sky EGC
Jeff Buell, Editor

Trivia Answers

1. The short answer is; to save daylight! First mentioned in the mid 1700s and seriously advocated in the 1900s, we did not officially observe Daylight Savings Time until World War I. Extending the amount of daylight during working hours was thought an effective way of saving electricity and fuel on artificial lighting. As for why it is still used today; this is based on an assumption that people like to be awake in daylight rather than in darkness!
2. Out of 91 possible days in September, October and November, we can expect to have 39 days of below freezing temperatures. 24 of those days are in November, that's not so bad is it?
3. The Blue Sky Region, is in the Boreal-Shield Forested Eco-zone. Within this zone the sub region of central Ontario (south of Temagami and the north shore of Georgian Bay) and eastern Quebec (south of Rouyan-Nouranda and Chicoutimi) has the most diverse forests in Canada and much of North America. Forests within the Blue Sky Region and the sub region of the Boreal-Shield Forested Eco-zone can have as many as 65-95 species of trees.

3 funding requests get conditional Board approval

A number of funding requests were brought forth to the Board during their monthly meeting.

Four requests were made for various projects in different amounts. Almaguin Highlans Strategic Plan Implementation Committee requested funding to go towards their branding and marketing efforts. The West Nipissing/Upper French Travel Association asked for funding to go towards the production and distribution of a travel brochure. And the Mattawa and Area Forestry Committee for Economic Development put in a request to be put towards an update and reprint of an information map of the Mattawa, Bonfield, Calvin and Papineau-Cameron area.

Although all asked for different amounts, all projects were conditionally approved for the same contribution; \$1,000.

While most projects were given less money than asked for, the unanimous decision by the board was to provide what remaining funding was available to these three projects. All of the requests incorporated some Regional aspect, that is to say that they all are attempting to promote a large but distinct part of the Blue Sky Region; there was a request from the west, east and south of the Region. A promotional CD from Temagami was given funding earlier this year.

The condition in the resolutions all read; "the project design [shall] include reference to "part of the Blue Sky Region". Appropriate logos shall appear on all printed materials. And that this funding is subject to Fednor approval.



Human Resources
Development Canada

Développement des
ressources humaines Canada