

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Provincial funding will help tackle cellular dead zones across Eastern Ontario**  
*Mobile broadband critical to regional growth*

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY – Investing in rural broadband infrastructure is critical for communities to engage in the growing digital economy, create jobs and enjoy economic growth.

Today, Monte McNaughton, Ontario's Minister of Infrastructure was in Northumberland County to announce that the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) will receive \$71 million to help fill gaps in mobile broadband coverage that are standing in the way of the region's economic development.

There are currently significant gaps in both the reach and capacity of mobile broadband networks across areas of rural Eastern Ontario where people live, work or travel:

- 40% of the area does not have access to high-definition services that allows streaming HD video.
- 20% of the area does not have access to standard definition video, typical mobile app use and video app calling.
- 10% has no voice call service.

EORN has developed a \$213 million public-private partnership to improve both the reach and quality of mobile broadband services in the region.

The province is providing one-third of the project funding. EORN is also seeking one-third federal funding support. All members of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus and most municipalities within the Eastern Ontario Mayors' Caucus have committed to contributing to the \$10 million municipal share. Mobile carriers, who will be selected through a competitive bidding process, are expected to provide the balance of the funding.

The gaps are the result of market failure. Rural areas don't generate enough revenue for mobile carriers to build adequate services. The CRTC recently designated both mobile and fixed broadband as basic services for all Canadians. The public-private partnership will reduce carriers' infrastructure costs, creating a stronger business case to improve services and meet the CRTC's basic service goals.

The improvements could unlock significant economic potential over 10 years, including:

- More than 3,000 full-time job equivalents.
- More than \$420 million in private sector business revenues.

(more)

### **About EORN**

EORN, a non-profit created by the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus (EOWC), helped to improve broadband access to nearly 90% of Eastern Ontario through a \$175 million fixed broadband network funded by the federal, provincial and municipal governments and private sector service providers. It works with governments and community organizations to improve and leverage broadband access to fuel economic development and growth across the region.

The EOWC directed EORN to prepare and submit a project proposal to improve access to mobile broadband services and support the creation of a public safety broadband network. More information is available at [www.eorn.ca](http://www.eorn.ca).

### **Quotes**

“Our government has committed to help people get the broadband and cellular connections they need. This means there are homes, businesses and major roadways where it is difficult to access the internet from a smart phone. We all know examples where people are put in dangerous positions because of dropped calls or lost connections during emergencies.”

- *Monte McNaughton, Minister of Infrastructure*

“Too often, Eastern Ontarians find themselves with no signal or dropped cell services. EORN is building on the investment we've already made in broadband infrastructure across the region to close the gap in mobile services and improve economic growth, quality of life and public safety.”

- *EORN Chair J. Murray Jones*

“The demand for mobile broadband is growing exponentially, but our region is deeply lacking the needed infrastructure to keep up. This project is our top priority because Eastern Ontario's economic future is at stake.”

- *EOWC Chair Andy Letham*

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