
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Citizens' Services

Improving internet access for people in the Kootenays

CASTLEGAR – Improved high-speed internet is on the way for 26 communities in the Kootenays, bringing people opportunities to learn, connect and better expand their businesses.

Columbia Basin Broadband Corporation (CBBC), a wholly owned subsidiary of Columbia Basin Trust, is receiving \$4.8 million in provincial funds for two new projects to improve broadband access in rural areas.

“In today’s digital age, the internet is part of the foundation for growing good-paying jobs, learning, healthcare and keeping in touch. Our government is committed to a future where everyone in B.C. has access to reliable and affordable high-speed internet,” said Jinny Sims, Minister of Citizens’ Services. “We have incredible tools and resources available to help rural and Indigenous communities form their own digital strategy so they can come forward with applications.”

Budget 2019 includes more opportunities to deliver better services to B.C. communities with \$50 million in additional new funds to expand access to high-speed internet, the largest provincial commitment to connectivity ever made. Local governments, non-profits, community internet service providers and others will continue to have opportunities to access grants to connect British Columbians with high-speed internet.

CBBC will install fibre-optic infrastructure for the two new projects announced today in the Slocan Valley and to just outside Nakusp, and the South Country near Jaffray. New fibre-optic lines will enable internet service providers to offer faster and more reliable services to people throughout the region.

“The Kootenays are a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family. Bringing high-speed internet to our rural communities ensures people in the region can enjoy the benefits of a rural lifestyle without sacrificing access to modern services,” said Katrine Conroy, MLA for Kootenay West. “These projects will improve the quality of life for many residents living in more remote locations.”

“Residents have told us that increasing high-speed internet connectivity throughout the region is important to them,” said Johnny Strilaeff, president and CEO, Columbia Basin Trust.

“Our partnership with the Province and local governments will expand affordable broadband availability in the Slocan Valley and South Country area. With a new fibre backbone in place, local internet service providers can greatly improve service to more residents in both areas.”

Since July 2017, several Connecting British Columbia projects to improve high-speed internet access are underway or completed, benefiting 443 communities — including 75 Indigenous communities.

Quick Facts:

- The Slocan Valley project will see CBBC install 125 kilometres of fibre-optic infrastructure to service the region between Shoreholme, just north of Nakusp, and the Playmor Junction, at an estimated total cost of \$7.2 million.
 - Communities benefiting from this work include Appledale, Brouse, Crescent Valley, Hills, Lebahdo, Lemon Creek, Nakusp, New Denver, Passmore, Perrys, Playmor Junction, Rosebery, Shoreholme, Silverton, Slocan, Slocan Park, South Slocan, Summit Lake, Vallican and Winlaw.
- The South Country project involves more than 50 kilometres of fibre-optic infrastructure installed between Jaffray and Roosville at an estimated total cost of \$2.9 million.
 - This project will help improve services for people in Tobacco Plains, Baynes Lake, Grasmere, Jaffray, Kragmont and Roosville.
- The total value of the Slocan Valley and the South Country projects is approximately \$10.2 million and includes \$4.4 million from CBBC, \$420,000 from the Regional District of East Kootenay and \$525,000 from the Regional District of Central Kootenay and communities in the Slocan Valley and Nakusp.
- These two projects are funded through the Connecting British Columbia intake announced in 2018, and are administered by Northern Development Initiative Trust.

Learn More:

Province makes historic investment in rural internet service:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2019CITZ0006-000348>

CBBC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Columbia Basin Trust created to improve high-speed internet access for people in southeast communities. <https://ourtrust.org/our-work/broadband/>

Northern Development Initiative Trust administers the Connecting British Columbia program:

<https://www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca/>

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