
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Citizens' Services

High-speed internet available in Lax Kw'alaams

VICTORIA – People living in Lax Kw'alaams off the northwestern coast of B.C. have access to reliable high-speed internet, enabling people to access online services and opportunities.

“This announcement is an essential step in our commitment to connect all First Nations communities in B.C. to high-speed internet,” said George Chow, Minister of Citizens' Services. “Reliable connectivity will ensure people in Lax Kw'alaams will have better access to education, health care and economic opportunities available online.”

With the installation of new last-mile infrastructure, approximately 340 households in Lax Kw'alaams have access to high-speed internet. Built and operated by service provider CityWest, the project leverages capacity provided by the Connected Coast network.

“Reliable high-speed internet in Lax Kw'alaams will enhance access to vital services, support our education and health-care systems, and open up new opportunities for our families and businesses,” said Garry Reece, mayor of Lax Kw'alaams. “We look forward to the positive impacts it will bring to our people now and for generations to come.”

The Government of British Columbia invested \$196,630 through the Connecting British Columbia program, administered by the Northern Development Initiative Trust. The Government of Canada invested \$523,016 through the federal Universal Broadband Fund and CityWest contributed \$423,591.

Since 2017, the Province has invested \$584 million to expand connectivity in British Columbia. As of January 2025, approximately 74% of rural homes and more than 80% of homes on First Nations reserves have access to high-speed internet.

In March 2022, the governments of British Columbia and Canada announced a partnership to invest as much as \$830 million to expand high-speed internet services. The Province also made a specific commitment to connect every First Nations community to high-speed internet services in the government's Declaration Act Action Plan.

The Connecting British Columbia and Connecting Communities BC funding programs support projects to expand high-speed internet access to rural and remote areas of the province. The plan to provide access to high-speed internet to all households will level the playing field for the people in British Columbia, ensuring better access to services and economic opportunities for every community.

Quotes:

Guidie Hutchings, federal Minister of Rural Economic Development, and Minister responsible

for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency –

“High-speed Internet is not a luxury; it is a necessity. That’s why the Government of Canada is working to bring high-speed Internet access to 98% of Canadian households by 2026 and 100% by 2030. In today’s digital world, communities big and small need reliable connectivity, whether for accessing health care or growing a business. The completion of this project marks a significant connectivity milestone for the people in Lax Kw’alaams.”

Christine Boyle, B.C. Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation –

“Access to high-speed internet is vital for supporting the growth and prosperity of Indigenous communities across British Columbia. The completion of this project not only connects Lax Kw’alaams to the digital world, but also strengthens cultural ties and supports education, health care and economic development that will unlock new opportunities for generations to come.”

Tamara Davidson, MLA for North Coast-Haida Gwaii –

“Access to high-speed internet transforms how people live, work and learn in remote and rural communities along the north coast of British Columbia. The completion of this project is a major step forward for the community of Lax Kw’alaams. I’m excited to see the opportunities this connectivity will create for local families and businesses.”

Stefan Woloszyn, chief executive officer, CityWest –

“CityWest is deeply rooted in northern B.C., and we are proud to provide improved services to another community in the North. We are honoured to deliver fibre-optic services in partnership with the Lax Kw’alaams Band. This project is not just about providing internet, it’s about enriching lives, fostering inclusion, creating opportunities and driving positive change.”

Learn More:

To learn more about connectivity in B.C.,

visit: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/connectivity-in-bc>

To learn more about Connecting Communities BC, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/connectivity-in-bc/20530/20601>

To learn more about Declaration Act Action Plan (action 4.36),

visit: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/government/ministries-organizations/ministries/indigenous-relations-reconciliation/declaration_act_action_plan.pdf

To learn more about StrongerBC: B.C.’s Economic Plan,

visit: <https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/economic-plan/>

Contact:

Ministry of Citizens’ Services
Media Relations
250 896-2057

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