

Bolton to benefit from increased connectivity to high-speed internet

By **Mark Pavilons**

More than \$219 million in combined federal and provincial funding for Rogers will help bring high-speed internet access to more than 66,000 households in over 300 Ontario communities, including over 600 Indigenous households.

Bolton will get the enhanced service.

The government believes that all Canadians need access to reliable high-speed internet, no matter where they live. The governments of Canada and Ontario are taking action to bring high-speed internet access to unserved and underserved communities across Ontario.

The projects are part of an existing partnership between Ontario and Canada. On July 29, 2021, the governments announced a Canada-Ontario broadband partnership to support large-scale, fibre-based projects that will provide high-speed internet access to more than 280,000 households across the province.

This historic agreement was made possible by a joint federal-provincial investment totalling more than \$1.2 billion.

This recent funding builds on the federal government's progress toward ensuring that 98 per cent of Canadians have access to high-speed internet by 2026, and 100 per cent by 2030.

The announcement also brings the Government of Ontario closer to achieving its goal of bringing reliable high-speed internet access to every community in the province by the end of 2025.

"We all know that internet is no longer a luxury ?it's a necessity. Today's announcement is a significant milestone for internet connectivity in rural Ontario. Working with Rogers, we will help connect more than 66,000 underserved households in over 300 rural communities in Ontario, including over 600 Indigenous households. Our government will continue to work side by side with our partners to achieve our connectivity targets and ensure that every Canadian, no matter where they live, has access to high-speed internet," said Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency.

"This investment is critical to ensuring that people and businesses alike can access high-speed internet when and where they need it. This initiative is another step forward as we fulfill our government's connectivity commitment by 2025," added Lisa Thompson, Ontario's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

"Access to reliable high-speed internet is critical for residents in Ontario today to stay connected with friends and family, and for businesses to operate and grow. We are proud to invest with the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario to bring high-speed fibre internet access to more than 66,000 households across southern Ontario, part of our coast-to-coast wireline network," said Ron McKenzie, Chief Technology and Information Officer, Rogers Communications Inc.

Canada's Connectivity Strategy aims to provide all Canadians with access to internet speeds of at least 50 megabits per second (Mbps) download/10 Mbps upload.

The Universal Broadband Fund is a \$3.225 billion investment by the Government of Canada designed to help provide high-speed internet access to 98 per cent of Canadians by 2026 and achieve the national target of 100 per cent access by 2030.

Today, 93.5 per cent of Canadian households have access to high-speed internet, compared to just 79 per cent in 2014.

The Ontario government is investing nearly \$4 billion to bring access to reliable high-speed internet to every community across the province by the end of 2025.

As of August 2023, Ontario has finalized agreements totalling more than \$2.3 billion for nearly 200 high-speed internet and cellular projects that will bring access to more than 500,000 homes and businesses across the province.

Earlier this year, Ontario launched a new interactive online map that shows where provincially funded high-speed internet projects are planned, are currently under way or have been recently completed. Ontarians can use the map to learn about projects in their area and find out where high-speed internet service is currently available.

In 2021, Ontario passed the Supporting Broadband and Infrastructure Expansion Act, 2021 to help speed up construction of high-speed internet projects. To build upon this legislation, the Ontario government also passed the Getting Ontario Connected Act, 2022, which further reduces barriers, duplication and delays.