

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 1, 2021

Lakeland Networks awarded \$4.8M Rural High-Speed Fibre Internet Project

Bracebridge, Ontario: On March 31, 2021, the Honourable Maryam Monsef, federal Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development announced \$3.1M in Universal Broadband Funding (UBF) for Lakeland Networks' \$4.8M rural community high-speed fibre internet project. In addition, Lakeland Networks will be contributing \$1.7M to Project ROBIN (Rural Ontario Broadband Internet Network) that will bring high-speed Internet to approximately 1,300 underserved households and businesses in South River, Katrine, Emsdale, Burk's Falls, Sundridge, Lake Bernard, and Machar, Ontario. The project will stretch up the Highway 11 corridor throughout the Almaguin Highlands Region.

The largest constraint in rolling out a robust rural fibre internet access program is financial. UBF funding for Project ROBIN allows Lakeland to bring the highest technology fibre optic connectivity to northern municipalities.



"The team at Lakeland are excited to begin and get people connected. We are thankful for this opportunity to connect households and businesses in the Almaguin Highlands Region," stated Dave Keith, Director of Business Development and Operations at Lakeland Networks.

The rural density of this area would preclude the installation of broadband that is scalable and best in technology without the funding support of UBF, leaving these areas with poor service which impacts daily lives and economic growth. This type of connectivity is a game changer for those living and working in this area. This past year has reinforced the need for quality internet services for every person in Canada.

The immediate impact of this proposal to the community at large is the temporary and full-time job creation. This project alone will provide a 60% increase in full time jobs over Lakeland's current complement during the construction phase and a 25% increase in permanent positions going forward, all located in the Muskoka and Parry Sound area. For the local project communities, the impact will be supporting new options for small business such as an online presence, allow for more robust Work from Home and School from Home options, support online information (medical etc.), booking options for resorts and tourism sites, and enhance access for those that wish to make this area their new home. All indications are that at least 20% of current seasonal residents will become permanent or full-time residents.



“This project is only possible due to the incredibly dedicated and professional Lakeland staff who have distinguished themselves over the years by providing exceptional broadband service” stated Chris Litschko, Chief Executive Officer of Lakeland Holding Ltd.

-END-

For further information, contact:
Jennifer Montpetit
Advanced Planning and Communications
Lakeland Holding Ltd
jmontpetit@lakelandholding.com
705-645-2670 Ext 504

About Lakeland Networks



Lakeland Energy’s retail arm Lakeland Networks provides internet services to more than 6,200 customers in mainly Parry Sound & Muskoka. Fibre optic and wireless internet service is provided in communities, from Sundridge south to Orillia, east to Lindsay and Fenelon Falls, as well as service to Wasauksing First Nation and additionally Parry Sound. Lakeland Networks is the largest and most diverse locally owned and based communications provider in the District of Parry Sound & Muskoka. Lakeland Energy is a subsidiary of Lakeland Holding Ltd. wholly owned by the municipalities of Bracebridge, Huntsville, Parry Sound, Burk’s Falls, Sundridge and Magnetawan.