



**MEDIA RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 10, 2020**

**Parry Sound-Muskoka telco Lakeland Energy
poised to launch up to 11 shovel-ready broadband builds**

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broadband builds**

Huntsville, Ontario: After ramping up to meet heightened broadband demand during the pandemic, Lakeland Energy is pleased to learn that new federal and provincial funding programs will be taking a tailored approach to support network infrastructure that best meets local connectivity needs. With government funding assistance, Lakeland is poised to begin rolling out as many as 11 separate projects to bring broadband to where it is most needed.

The 11 projects are part of a plan Lakeland has developed to increase Internet coverage, at speeds of 50/10 Mbps and beyond, to another 21,000 homes and businesses, reaching almost 100,000 local residents. The areas are located between Gravenhurst, throughout most of Muskoka, west to Parry Sound, east to Dwight and north to South River. “With our 500 kilometers of fibre optics, access to more than 100 towers, and local ownership and expertise, Lakeland is uniquely positioned to help deliver more broadband where it is most needed,” advised Chris Litschko, CEO.

The projects would build on Lakeland Energy’s existing network infrastructure, engineering, and customer service expertise, including fibre optics and wireless operating divisions. “We have successfully worked with Lakeland in rolling out high speed broadband throughout our territory. They have the resources to construct this critical infrastructure elsewhere as well,” Craig Brown, Chief Executive Director for Wasauksing First Nation.

“Our unique mapping, fibre, and wireless expertise has allowed us to create a plan that is shovel-ready and can begin immediately,” added Dave Keith, Director of Business Development & Operations. “We look forward to working with local partners to ramp up quickly.”



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COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of tackling broadband in a region challenged with thick forest, lakes, and rugged terrain making good broadband inaccessible for many without government funding support. Lakeland Energy's plan is part of its effort to fill in remaining underserved areas in the region over the next 5-7 years in ways that support new options for small business, allow for more robust school and work-from-home options, and enhance access for those who make Parry Sound-Muskoka their homes, or wish to.

About Lakeland Energy

Servicing 6,000 broadband customers, Lakeland Energy is a subsidiary of Lakeland Holding wholly owned by the municipalities of: Bracebridge, Huntsville, Parry Sound, Burks Falls, Sundridge and Magnetawan. Fibre optic division *Lakeland Networks* was the first in Ontario to offer 1 gigabit internet speeds and currently offers one of the fastest speeds in North America. The company now offers triple play (TV, Internet, Phone) services across its network. Wireless division *Interactive North* utilizes 77 owned and 41 leased towers covering almost 4,000 square kilometers around Muskoka and Southern Parry Sound. The company has been first to market in many leading-edge wireless technologies such as fixed wireless LTE and millimeter wave pre 5G service.

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