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## CRTC considers Northern phone competition

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Yellowknife, N.W.T. - Northwestel has the market cornered on local phone service in the North - for now.

Canada's communications regulator, the CRTC, currently protects the company from any competition, and they're holding a public hearing in Yellowknife to determine if that should change.

A spokesperson for the CRTC, Denis Carmel said they held a hearing in 2006 and decided it wasn't time for competition.

"Now we have a new situation. We have a provider that is advocating that he can do it and that's what we will be looking at at the hearing."

Local Internet provider, SSI Micro, is among the companies and governments taking part in the hearing.

It's chief development officer, Dean Proctor, said they're ready to provide voice services.

"I guess it's just something that's past due. It's unfortunate that the rules haven't changed before this, but now we have a chance to do that, and have the North catch up with the rest of the world."

The territories are the only jurisdictions in Canada that don't offer competition for home phone services.

Other than SSI, the governments of Yukon, the NWT and Nunavut, and reps from Telus and Northwestel are expected at the public hearing, starting on Oct. 4th at the Yellowknife Inn.

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