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NWT goes broadband

Christine Grimard

Northern News Services
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YELLOWKNIFE - Broadband Internet is now available to every community in the NWT.

The announcement brought together community representatives and communications industry leaders who gathered at the Explorer Hotel Tuesday.

"We're happy to say that all of this is completed and we're up and running," said Darrell Beaulieu, president of Falcon Communications. "It's only since 1991 that we've had the World Wide Web. It's amazing how fast this industry has grown."

Beaulieu made the announcement alongside Jeff Philipp, president of SSI Micro Ltd. Falcon Communications worked with SSI Micro Ltd., the service provider, at setting up satellite stations in 30 communities previously lacking broadband Internet service.

The federal government contributed more than \$5 million for the network, matched by a similar investment by SSI Micro Ltd.

Although Philipp was pleased to announce the completion of the project setting up the initial network, he said that there is still much work to be done to make the network more accessible to the communities. In some locales, access is limited to a central site.

"The challenge has just begun," Philipp said. "Now we face the challenges of trying to get the funding to get some programs."

Although the two companies have held up their end of the bargain in setting up the access stations, Don Horrocks, owner of Num Num's video in Tsiigehtchic, said that he's still waiting for the NWT Power Corporation to connect power to the building.

Horrocks said the station has been set up since the summer, waiting for electricity.

The federal government has also contributed up to \$7 million from the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund to help reduce the cost of satellite communications, making broadband Internet more affordable to individuals in the communities.

