



NEWS RELEASE

Building Digital Bridges:

SSi applauds federal budget and Government of Canada's announced investments in Northern broadband

YELLOWKNIFE, February 11, 2014. In the October 16, 2013 Speech from the Throne, the Government of Canada affirmed its continued support for the development of broadband in Canada's remote areas. In today's budget speech, Finance Minister Flaherty made a significant commitment of support, pledging to invest \$305 million over five years to extend and enhance broadband high-speed Internet access for rural and Northern communities.

"Canada's North is an underdeveloped market for communications. There has not been enough investment in infrastructure, and there is growing demand for better service and technology," said Jeff Philipp, Founder and CEO of the SSi Group of Companies (SSi). "Nowhere in this country is support to develop broadband more important than in the North, and we are very pleased that today's budget pledges significant investments to help address the digital divide for people living here. This will allow for better and more affordable broadband."

"Those who want to see the future of this country should look North"

- Prime Minister Stephen Harper, August 2012, Whitehorse

For SSi, more affordable and better broadband services are essential if a dynamic and competitive local communications market is to develop in the North, and along with that, new investment, new innovation, consumer choice, and competitive local pricing. A lack of investment and backbone capacity inhibits market development and the delivery of services for consumers, business and government.

"Today's budget contains very good news for Northern consumers," said Dean Proctor, Chief Development Officer of SSi, "With these investments, the Government continues its role as a key partner to further develop the communications market in the North. This will allow for much needed growth in broadband, and assist the development of mobile, competitive local voice and essential government services. We look forward to work with the Government to realize these investments as concrete action plans in the North."



Quick Stats:

Canada's North is experiencing rapid growth:

- GDP is projected to grow 64% to \$16.3 billion by 2025 (*per Conference Board of Canada*)
- Mining, energy and transport sectors show immense potential
- Without supporting infrastructure, projected growth will be constrained

According to the CRTC's 2013 Communications Monitoring Report, Canada's North receives sub-par broadband access:

- In 2012, less than 50% of Northerners had access to 5 Mbps broadband download speeds (at very high cost)
- In 2013, no satellite served community offered consumers access to 5 Mbps broadband speeds
- Yet in 2013, 94% of Canadians has access download speeds in excess of 5 Mbps
- In 2011, the average residential download speed in Southern Canada was 11.5 Mbps

By working to narrow the access gap between North and South with more and affordable broadband capacity, we will encourage local market development and greater choices for consumers, business and government.

The Federal Government's budget can be found at: <http://www.budget.gc.ca/home-accueil-eng.html>

About SSi: Headquartered in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, the SSi Group of Companies provides broadband service across Canada's North. SSi understands first-hand the challenges faced in providing effective and affordable communications services to remote and outlying areas, and in providing a competitive alternative to the incumbent operator in small and remote markets.

SSi has deployed advanced satellite and local broadband wireless facilities that deliver services throughout Nunavut under the "QINIQ" brand, and in over thirty communities of the Northwest Territories, an area spanning over three million square kilometers. The network uses state-of-the-art full mesh connectivity and supports broadband Internet, voice and videoconferencing technologies.

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