

## Cumberland-Colchester issue RFEI for Broadband Service

By Maurice Rees

Cumberland and Colchester have issued a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) which once implemented would result in one of Canada's most connected rural regions in Canada. The RFEI was issued May 24th and closes on June 7th. The work schedule calls for applicants to be advised by June 14th, which will permit the joint municipal applications to be submitted by June 28 to align with Develop Nova Scotia (DNS) deadline.

The Cumberland-Colchester vision is that the entire geographic area will be served by a state-of-the-art continuously upgraded communications network that includes capacity for reliable, affordable, highest-speeds internet access, as well as mobile telephone, community Wi-Fi, and internet-of-things uses such as 'smart agriculture', 5 G and other future applications.

The RFEI states, given the urgency of need and current array of funding opportunities, companies with dedicated expertise, rather than the Municipalities, are best positioned to design, build, and service this needed infrastructure. The municipalities think the Develop Nova Scotia goals, processes, and resources, as conveyed in its recently released Request for Proposals, offer the best opportunity to create our core network as quickly as possible.

The municipalities, who each have identified major improvements to rural broadband service as top priorities, are prepared to contribute toward projects that move closer to the vision of optimally connected rural communities. This RFEI is open only to the eight internet service companies who are eligible to respond to DNS-1920-0001 RFP.

The vision for Colchester-Cumberland as a region of connected rural communities requires the quickest route to fulfillment of DNS and CRTC goals for rural broadband services and reach; but it extends beyond these to include medium and longer-term achievements. Examples of these goals, which will be developed in more detail collaboratively with communications companies who share our vision, are: Extended network reach bringing us to 100% coverage throughout Cumberland-Colchester; Closing fibre-optic 'loops' to ensure services remain operable in the case of fibre cuts; Deploying spare duct capacity to accommodate future services growth; Introduction of infrastructure to achieve community access points and smart-community sensor inputs and Enhanced road condition and weather monitoring.

Other inclusions are: Support for 'smart' applications such as those emerging in agriculture; Support for 5G services from mobile operators; Wi-Fi access points for the



public; Next-gen test sites for incubation of technologies and business applications requiring intensive network capacity and Select internet-of-things implementations for municipal services and assets, fleet monitoring, and other yet-to-be anticipated applications.

Applicants are asked to provide answers to the following: Do you intend to make application to DNS-1920-0001 as lead applicant for 2019 projects in any part of the Colchester or Cumberland zones? If your applications will include any other DNS suppliers from the pre-qualification list, please identify them and their roles.

Geographic scope of DNS-1920-0001 project proposals that include all or parts of the Cumberland and Colchester zones. Levels of service (end-to-end performance specifications), with timeline for implementation (delivery). High-level description of proposed technology specifications for middle and last mile elements, with timeline for incremental upgrades, and necessary assets (e.g. infrastructure access, spectrum allocation).

Number of households to be reached, noting deployment increments and areas in order of delivery. Please state your understanding of 'underserved' and provide estimates of the number of underserved households your projects in Cumberland and Colchester will reach with DNS's required performance specification standards. Plans for retail pricing and packaging corresponding with service offerings and any data restrictions. Estimated full project costs (per project) using high-level categories of expenditures.

Proposed funding scenario (with funding sources, including anticipated request from DNS/INSI and proposed municipal amounts, which could include Federal funds coming through the Municipalities). Possible and preferred forms of Municipal contributions. Possible and preferred goods and services to be exchanged for contributions, including future-use and community benefits. Examples of possible goods and services are things like accounts for community Wi-Fi and irrefutable use access to dark strands or infrastructure elements.

The RFEI is open to the eight internet service companies who are eligible to respond to DNS-1920-0001 RFP by June 7. The counties of Cumberland-Colchester anticipate submitting a detailed application to DNS to align with its deadline of June 28th.

## "Let's Talk Tidal Power" – a Great First Step

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province lacks the marine expertise to properly regulate marine projects such as tidal power.

Before authorizing these in-stream tidal power projects DFO was in an advisory role to the province and not in a regulatory role. DFO over the past 4 years has built up their capacity and team on tidal power, advancing needed change and over-sight to this industry.

This meeting was the beginning step to resolving issues and start the process of moving forward for the fishermen, who have felt they are not listened to, nor respected enough.

Fishermen unarguably have a magnitude of knowledge in the marine environment and its extremely complex inner workings that not only needs to be taken into account, but if listened to will eventually assist any chance tidal power has of being successful. Fishermen and the entire fishing industry are the leading knowledge holders in the marine environment.

For too long the different parties surrounding tidal power have stood in silos. Everyone in different sand boxes not playing well with each other. This must stop, and

these meetings must continue otherwise the conflict will persevere.

Only when traditional, local and Academic knowledge holders as well as regulators, bureaucrats, and industry learn to respect each other and value each other will any progress be possible. We have hope this can be achieved though more events such as this one. We have broken bread, now it's time to move ahead.

DFO has shown its willingness to engage as well as listen, they have proven their ability to take the first steps to reconcile and perhaps even lead the way in paving the road forward with their latest achievement in making the decision to bring NSPI into compliance at the Annapolis tidal power plant.

The Annapolis Tidal Power Plant is currently not operational and will be required to get ministerial authorization before being potentially able to continue to operate in future. This gives the public and the fisheries hope, we are going to see this industry regulated with the seriousness that the fisheries is and if the effects of one of these operations such as the Annapolis tidal plant is too much it will be dealt with by DFO.

The authorization of the Annapolis tidal plant to resume operating will be no easy task for NSPI. It will also require conciliation with First Nations.

Often the fisheries finds themselves frustrated with DFO, but now we feel like we have a responsible big brother out there ensuring our industry's future success, as well as, our marine ecosystem is protected, as it needs to be.

Now let's find a way for-

ward so all can prosper and feel like our waters and the life within them will be there for generations to come. Thank you to all that attended the meeting on April 1st. I'm sure it was far from easy to do so. This should bring forward a new chapter if everyone continues to come together.

**Darren Porter is Spokesman for the Fundy United Federation. He can be reached at:**

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## PHOTO CONTEST

The Shoreline Journal is conducting a photo contest for the best photos along the Shore from Truro to Advocate.

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Take photos of each season. Submissions to be made in December 2019.

Judging and awards in January, 2020.

Complete rules and submission details announced in September.

Contact: Maurice Rees: [maurice@theshorelinejournal.com](mailto:maurice@theshorelinejournal.com)

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