

January 3, 2018

Canada's largest, publicly funded, regional broadband project prepares for construction

Today, SouthWestern Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) takes a major leap forward with the launch of its first in a series of upcoming Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP outlines a complete list of deliverables and requirements for the design, construction, operation and maintenance of an ultra-high speed, open access, fibre optic backbone network for Southwestern Ontario, Caledon and the Niagara Region.

In May 2017, SWIFT issued a Request for Prequalification (RFPQ) whereby twenty-eight (28) Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) were prequalified and became eligible, as potential proponents, to participate in the SWIFT RFP processes. The final list of prequalified TSPs was released in July 2017. Today's RFP was issued to all 28 prequalified TSPs by means of Bonfire, a secure electronic tendering portal. TSPs who successfully demonstrate their ability to meet the minimum technical and financial capacity requirements will be eligible to continue participating in the RFP process, and will be expected to respond with competitive Proposals prior to the RFP closing time. SWIFT anticipates selecting the Preferred Proponent(s) in the spring of 2018, with construction of the network commencing mid 2018. In order to participate in the RFP, interested respondents must have been prequalified through the RFPQ process. Providers, who did not participate or were unsuccessful in the RFPQ process, yet have an interest in contributing to the RFP submission are encouraged to partner with one of the prequalified TSPs to participate further in this RFP process.

Prequalified service providers include:

- Bell Canada
- BH Telecom Corp.
- Bluewater Regional Networks Inc.
- Brant Municipal Enterprises Inc.
- Brooke Telecom Co-operative Ltd.
- Bruce Telecom
- CK Open Fibre Inc.
- Cogeco Connexion Inc.
- Distributel Communications Limited
- Eastlink
- Execulink Telecom Inc.
- Fengate Capital Management, Ltd.
- Frontline 360 Inc.
- GB TEL Incorporated
- HCE Telecom
- Hydro One Telecom Inc.
- Lakeland Energy Ltd.
- Macquarie Capital Development Canada Limited
- Nexicom Inc.
- Niagara Regional Broadband Network Limited
- North Frontenac Telephone Company, Elgin Corp.
- Rogers Communications Canada Inc.
- Silo Wireless Inc.
- TeraGo Networks Inc.
- The North Frontenac Telephone Company Corp.
- Vianet Inc.
- Xplornet Communications Inc.
- Zayo Group LLC

“This is a very exciting time for SWIFT,” said Gerry Marshall, Board Chair at SWIFT. “We are moving into the next phase of our project and moving one step closer toward realizing our goal of building broadband for every farm, home and business in Southwestern Ontario, Caledon and the Niagara Region.”

“All of Ontario’s communities require equal access to the technological advances that broadband enables,” said Geoff Hogan, Chief Executive Officer at SWIFT. “Creating a fully integrated, fibre optic broadband network is the key to growing our communities and unlocking Ontario’s economic potential.”

About the SWIFT Initiative

SWIFT is a not-for-profit, collective broadband initiative that is funding the construction of an affordable, open-access, ultra high-speed fibre-optic regional broadband network for everyone in Southwestern Ontario, Caledon and the Niagara Region. To overcome our region’s longstanding broadband infrastructure gaps, SWIFT has developed a long-term plan to help more than 3.5 million Ontarians to connect and keep pace in a changing digital world. SWIFT membership is open to any community or organization in southwestern Ontario that needs connectivity to any of its locations. Members benefit from SWIFT’s significant procurement expertise, including aggregated demand, negotiated rates, and support in preparing RFPs for broadband services. As a buying group, SWIFT also ensures greater competition between telecom service providers which will lead to better services at lower prices in member communities.

Help SWIFT build “broadband for everyone” by completing an Internet usage survey:
www.swiftnetwork.ca/survey

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