

Mackenzie Valley Fibre Line contract signed

YELLOWKNIFE (November 3, 2014) – Finance Minister J. Michael Miltenberger announced today that the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) has signed a contract with Northern Lights General Partnership (Northern Lights) to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link (MVFL) project. The contract calls for construction of the fibre link, over 1,400 kilometres long, to be completed by mid-2016. The contract also includes ongoing operation of the system for a period of 20 years.

The GNWT selected Northern Lights following an evaluation of competitive proposals submitted by pre-qualified contractors.

"This is a major step in bringing the benefits of state-of-the-art fibre telecommunications to our communities in the Mackenzie Valley and Beaufort Delta regions," said Minister Miltenberger. "We anticipate that construction will start in January 2015 and the system between High Level, Alberta and Inuvik will be operational by mid-2016."

The MVFL is a key component of the GNWT's commitment to provide improved delivery of health, education and social services to remote communities in the Mackenzie region. The MVFL will also provide a fibre link between the satellite receiving station in Inuvik and southern Canadian networks, enabling space agencies worldwide to have high speed access to the Inuvik facility.

The GNWT and Northern Lights will be working together to complete the preparatory work required before construction can begin in January. Filing of the Project Description Report with the Mackenzie Valley Land and Water Board, the next step in the regulatory review process, took place last Friday, October 31.

"Ledcor is proud that our joint venture with Northwestel was selected by the Government of Northwest Territories to build the first fibre link between the North American Internet backbone and the Canadian Arctic Ocean," said Scott Lyons, COO, Ledcor LTS. "This is a historic and exciting project with many technical and logistical challenges and we look forward to commencing construction."

The new fibre link is a significant step in creating an alternative network path for communication services in the case of accidental fibre cuts. "Northwestel is thrilled to have earned the opportunity to provide advanced telecommunications solutions to the communities and residents of the Mackenzie Valley," said Paul Flaherty, President and CEO of Northwestel. "This significant project is a major step forward in the provision of advanced fibre infrastructure in Canada's North. It will redefine communications for the area and we are looking forward to working with our partners at Ledcor LTS to make this fibre link a reality."

Today's announcement formalizes selection by the GNWT of Northern Lights as the preferred choice to work on the MVFL.

Northern Lights is a consortium comprised of Ledcor Developments Ltd., including Ledcor Technical Services, and Northwestel. Ledcor Development and Ledcor Technical Services are subsidiaries of the Ledcor Group. Northwestel is wholly owned by BCE Inc.

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