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Wireless broadband creeps North

Stephan Burnett
Northern News Services

Yellowknife (Feb 16/04) - "Our network will rock," says Jeff Philipp, owner of SSI Micro.

Philipp was referring to a new wireless broadband Internet network that his company is hoping will reach across the North.

Yellowknife was the first community equipped with this technology, but Philipp said his company is looking to expand throughout Nunavut and the Northwest Territories.

"We are out looking at other markets," said Philipp. "Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation plans technological roll-outs in any community over 1,000, which is 10 of the 27 communities."

In the NWT, SSI has not yet determined which communities will be offered the service and in which order they will proceed, said Philipp.

The new wireless network is primarily being dedicated for residential Internet access.

The network will easily handle desktop to desktop video streaming and even multipoint video streaming, said Philipp.

But for large scale video conferencing, Philipp says a business and government service with limited users will be introduced over the next few months. This will allow video conferencing for both business and government, which could save thousands on the bottom line for the companies and agencies involved, said Philipp.

Through the introduction of a virtual private network which encrypts Internet code, these wireless communications could be made secure, an important feature when looking to meet the needs of corporate and governmental clients, said Philipp.

The transmitter uses a radio-wave type frequency on the higher end of the bandwidth scale, which is licensed at 2.5 gigahertz (GHz).

Receivers no larger than a library book receive the signal, which plug into personal computers. "It's like a pool table. You crank the cue ball and it bounces around, which is why it gets such great penetration," said Ryan Walker, SSI sales manager.

The current wireless technology makes use of multipaths wireless signals that reflect off of buildings or geographical features, allowing antennae to be faced in the complete opposite direction and still receive a strong signal.

"This is exciting news for everyone involved," said Andre Tremblay, president and CEO, Inukshuk Internet Inc., the network that supports the new service.

"We are committed to the success of this launch, which will allow for a new form of high quality, high-speed Internet service.

"Broadband wireless access can foster opportunities and overcome the barriers of distance for Canada's North.

"We are very pleased to be working with SSI Micro to deliver our vision of connecting Canadians in all parts of the country," said Tremblay in a news release issued Feb. 11.

