TO: National Grand Chief Phil Fontaine  
FROM: Geordi Kakepetum, Executive Director  
SUBJECT: KO’s Kuhkenah Broadband Network (K-Net)  
DATE: May 12, 2004

**ISSUES FOR KO’s Kuhkenah Broadband Network (K-Net)**

- **Ongoing growth and operation of the Kuhkenah Broadband Network (K-Net) requires the support and utilization by First Nation organizations serving the First Nations already on the network.**

- **Identifying funding programs that will support the Assembly of First Nations to establish a broadband IP video conferencing network with their regional offices and executive has been discussed at various levels but to date, no developments have taken place to work with the Keewaytinook Okimakanak team to establish such a link.**

- **Different First Nation organizations across the country are working with K-Net to develop their own regional networks and link together with our networks and share limited resources (financial, staffing and bandwidth) using a variety of funding programs but it is critical that the Federal government and First Nation groups use these services instead of contracting urban-based corporations to provide these services.**

- **A broadband network supports individuals and First Nation businesses to be hired or contracted to complete various jobs and initiatives while remaining in and contributing to the economic welfare of their communities, when organizations, governments and businesses support a distributed work force but most contracts and positions still require moving people away from the communities into urban centres.**

**BACKGROUND**

- Keewaytinook Okimakanak has been working with Nishnawbe Aski Nation and other First Nation organizations to identify strategies to ensure all the NAN First Nations have the proper telecommunications infrastructure to be able to access broadband applications and services.
- Keewaytinook Okimakanak is operating its broadband network with program staff
located in offices in Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout, Balmertown and in all the KO member First Nations across the region.

- Employment opportunities in First Nations are often very limited to the existing services and administrative programs that are funded by government programs.
- There is an opportunity to reduce high operational costs for urban-based office complexes for staffing and salaries supporting that expensive urban lifestyle through the use of ICTs in the development and delivery of programs and services within a distributed management model.
- Training and administrative services is being delivered and supported using these communication tools and various innovative delivery strategies.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- The international virtual conference provided a model and live demonstration for using a variety of ICTs for people to meet, share, interact, exchange information. Jesse Fiddler, K-Net’s Multi-media presentation is an excellent example of using a variety of on-line tools to support meeting participants or to conduct training and share information. All these communication tools are accessible to First Nation schools, communities and organizations. Visit [http://smart.knet.ca/international](http://smart.knet.ca/international) and click on ARCHIVE to view any of these presentations.
- Video conferencing is an important driver for broadband connections. Two-way video is becoming more and more accessible along with the tools for archiving and sharing these presentations, meetings and conferences on-line. The Kuhkenah video conferencing reaches across Canada with partner organizations and communities located from the First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) in British Columbia to the Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nation Chiefs (APC)'s First Nations Helpdesk in Sydney, Nova Scotia.
- Developing community networks that are capable of delivering and supporting a variety of business applications and services including small business incubation, Applications Service Provider, internet services, library services, video conferencing, IP telephone services, training, equipment maintenance and retail, etc is an economic development opportunity for every First Nation.
- Supporting the aggregation of the community network broadband connection by connecting the different programs and services to the same connection and sharing the ongoing monthly operational cost spreads the burden of this expense between the local health centre, the school, the band office, the homes and other programs and businesses in the community. This community aggregation model is in place in several First Nations in Northern Ontario and other communities are now implementing similar broadband development and operational models.

**FUTURE DIRECTION**

- Work with other First Nations and their organizations to support their inclusion on the Kuhkenah Broadband Network.
- Contract local First Nation community members to deliver services and complete tasks required by the organization, the network and our partners.