



# KNET NEWSLETTER

## FIRST NATION INNOVATION & DIGITAL INCLUSION



Winter 2026

### HOT TOPICS:

- Outsmart Scammers: Cyber Tips for Elders
- Broadband Upgrade Project Complete in 18 First Nations: We are pleased to share that the NWOBEI broadband upgrade project is now complete.
- KNET Project Updates & Service Expansion
- Preparing for Emergencies
- Network Upgrades: Fiber First, Backup Always
- Cellular Network Improvements
- Expanding Business & Office Network Solutions
- Supporting Community Growth

Over the past year, KNET has been focused on one clear priority: building stronger, more resilient connectivity for northern First Nations — the kind of connectivity communities can rely on in everyday life and in emergencies.

We know the realities of working in the North. Weather, distance, outages, and increasingly severe fire seasons can all impact services. That's why our work has been centered on redundancy and reliability — building networks that don't depend on a single connection pathway. In many communities, we are strengthening the main fibre network while also adding satellite backup options to support continuity when the primary connection is interrupted.

Satellite backup is not meant to replace community-owned infrastructure — it's an additional layer of resiliency that helps keep essential services connected.

This approach extends beyond backbone projects. Increasingly, communities are asking for support inside their buildings too — in nursing stations, band offices, schools, and other essential workplaces — where reliable local networks are just as important as the connection to the community. Through KNET's Business Services team, we can provide complete office network solutions, including secure firewalls, strong Wi-Fi coverage designed for the entire building, phones, and managed IT support — with backup connectivity included where needed.

On the cellular side, our teams have also been working on improving resiliency by adding alternate routing paths and strengthening how cell sites connect back to KNET systems. This work helps ensure mobile services are better protected from single points of failure. **contd...pg3**





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None of this work happens without partnership. We're grateful to community leadership, local technicians, and the teams on the ground who support installations, troubleshoot challenges, and keep services running day to day. Your work and collaboration is what makes community-owned networks possible.

As we move into the coming year, we'll continue sharing updates on projects, service improvements, and practical information communities can use — clearly, calmly, and with transparency. KNET remains committed to building connectivity that works for the North, led by the North.

**According to the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC), 17,000 cases of fraud targeting seniors were reported in 2024, resulting in \$137.9 million in losses. Thousands more incidents likely went unreported.**

# Outsmart Scammers: Cyber Tips for Elders

The most common types of fraud affecting older adults include identity theft, financial fraud, grandparent scams, and tech support scams. Seniors are often prime targets for scammers because of several reasons.

- Trusting Nature - Many are polite and willing to help, making them easier to manipulate.
- Less Familiar with Technology - Limited experience with smartphones, computers, and online security increases vulnerability.
- Financial Stability - Many seniors have pensions, savings, or assets that scammers seek.
- Isolation and Loneliness - Seniors living alone may be more susceptible to phone, email, or online contact from strangers. A friendly email or voice on the phone may or could go a long way to gain trust quickly.
- Reluctance to Report - Fear, embarrassment, or confusion often prevents them from reporting scams, allowing fraudsters to continue.

**Cybersecurity 101 for SENIORS**

- THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK**  
Don't open suspicious links.
- WATCH OUT FOR URGENCY**  
Scammers often pressure you to act fast—pause and verify.
- BEWARE OF "TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE" OFFERS**  
Free gifts, lottery winnings, or surprise refunds are common lures.
- VERIFY BEFORE SHARING**  
Don't give personal or financial info unless you're certain who's asking.
- WHEN IN DOUBT—STOP AND ASK**  
If unsure, talk to family, friends, or trusted community members.

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# BROADBAND UPGRADE PROJECT COMPLETE

## In 18 First Nations across Northern Ontario

We are pleased to share that the NWOBEI broadband upgrade project is now complete in 18 First Nations across Northern Ontario. This milestone represents a major step forward in strengthening community-owned connectivity and ensuring reliable, affordable internet access for homes and essential services.

The 18 First Nations that are now benefiting from these upgrades include: Sandy Lake, Wapekeka, Weagamow Lake, Deer Lake, Kasabonika Lake, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug, Wunnummin Lake, Bearskin Lake, Cat Lake, Sachigo Lake, Poplar Hill, Kingfisher Lake, Muskrat Dam, Keewaywin, North Spirit Lake, Slate Falls, Pikangikum and Wawakapewin

### STRONGER COMMUNITY-OWNED NETWORKS

This project focused on upgrading the backbone infrastructure in each community, including the installation of new head-end equipment. Communities now have access to up to 10 Gbps at the head end, providing a stronger foundation for current and future connectivity needs.

These improvements allow First Nations to continue offering community, owned broadband services that are often more affordable than commercial satellite options such as Starlink, keeping ownership, control, and economic benefits within the community. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to community leadership, local technicians, and residents who worked closely with KNET staff throughout this project. Your collaboration and support made this work possible.



This project was made possible thanks to the support of our funders:  
Ministry of Energy and Mines  
Innovation, Science and Economic  
Development Canada

# BUILDING STRONGER SMARTER NETWORKS ACROSS THE NORTH



## KNET Project Updates & Service Expansion

Over the past year, KNET has continued strengthening digital infrastructure across Northern Ontario First Nations. From broadband backbone upgrades to cellular redundancy improvements and expanded business services, our focus remains clear: building reliable networks that always have a backup.

Connectivity is no longer optional, it is critical for health, governance, emergency response, education, and economic development. That is why we design our systems with resilience at the core.

[www.knet.ca](http://www.knet.ca)

## PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

The past summer's forest fires highlighted the importance of resilient communications infrastructure. In response, KNET designed and tested solutions that allow networks to maintain service during disruptions. The satellite backup design developed by our networking team has been tested and is now available as part of our resiliency strategy. Our goal is simple: ensure First Nations have dependable communication pathways during emergencies.

## STAFF UPDATES

KNET like many organizations in the area goes through staffing changes. Find out who's new, who's changed roles, and who's no longer with us. Read on to learn more about our staff updates!

### New Staff

**Jean Zerrudo**

Finance Assistant

**For Available Positions at  
KNET visit our website.  
[www.knet.ca/careers](http://www.knet.ca/careers)**

@Kuhkenah bPc / K-Nete

# NETWORK UPGRADES:

## NETWORK UPGRADES: FIBER FIRST, BACKUP ALWAYS



Our primary focus has been expanding and strengthening community fiber networks. The backbone infrastructure built in many communities now provides strong, high-capacity connections that support essential services and long-term growth.

But reliability does not stop at fiber.

To ensure communities remain connected even if the main line is disrupted, we are implementing satellite data backups at many sites. These satellite connections act as a secondary data path in the event of fiber outages — whether due to weather, equipment failure, or emergencies such as forest fires.

It's important to clarify: this is not satellite-based cellular service. Rather, it is a satellite data backup that supports the main fiber network. This design allows flexibility — we are not tied to a single satellite provider and can adapt as technology evolves.

This approach ensures communities have continuity of service when it matters most.

### CELLULAR NETWORK IMPROVEMENTS

On the cellular side, our team has implemented a new resilient design at many sites. KNET's networking team has developed a new virtual private network (VPN) structure that allows multiple routes back to the KNET data center. Here's how it works:

- Cellular signals convert into data.
- That data travels back to the KNET data center.
- If the primary fiber route becomes unavailable, the system automatically switches to a satellite backup route.

This creates an additional data pathway and improves reliability across cell sites. Many communities now benefit from this redundancy, with more sites scheduled for implementation.

# EXPANDING BUSINESS & OFFICE NETWORK SOLUTIONS



While much of our funding has focused on backbone infrastructure, there is increasing demand for internal office network solutions, including Band offices, health centres, nursing stations, and administrative buildings.

KNET's Network and Business Sales department has been working on providing complete network packages tailored for these environments.

These solutions can include:

- Fiber internet connection
- Satellite data backup
- Firewall and secure local area network (LAN)
- Full-building Wi-Fi mapping to ensure strong coverage
- Local phone systems
- Managed IT services
- Device supply (laptops, printers, workstations)

For example, in Kingfisher Lake, the nursing station requested a satellite backup to support their connectivity needs. While they were not included in a specific funded project, KNET can provide backup solutions that integrate directly with community networks.

It's important to understand that satellite service is not a standalone solution, it works best as part of a complete network package designed around community infrastructure.

As funding for internal office systems is limited, many of these upgrades rely on community or organizational budgets. KNET is ready to provide quotes and help offices build reliable, secure systems that meet their operational needs.

# SUPPORTING COMMUNITY GROWTH

Another growing challenge involves new housing developments and subdivisions in communities. While power infrastructure may be installed, internet infrastructure is not always included in those builds.

KNET encourages communities to contact us early when planning new developments. If your cable plant is ready and new homes are being built, we can provide quotes and work with you to extend broadband service to those areas. Connectivity planning should happen alongside power and road planning — not after.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The past year has focused heavily on strengthening backbone networks. The next phase builds on that foundation, expanding secure office networks, improving redundancy, and ensuring communities have sustainable, long-term solutions.

As always, we thank community leadership, technicians, and partners who continue to work alongside us.

**Together, we are building networks that are not only faster — but smarter, stronger, and ready for the future.**

## SERVICE AREAS AT A GLANCE

KNET continues to provide and expand services in the following areas:

- Broadband & Networking
- Cellular Infrastructure
- Business Network Solutions
- Managed IT Services
- Service Help Desk Support

We are proud to support community-owned networks and continue building systems that are reliable, scalable, and designed for the realities of the North.