



**A Moment of Opportunity:  
Delivering for Northern Communities  
in an Internet World**

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of  
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**to**

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Merci, Maxim (Jean Louis, President & CEO of Contact North/*Contact Nord*). Thank you for your kind words.

It's a pleasure for me to be with you today. So many of you. I'm truly honoured.

I'm especially grateful that the mayors of Northern Ontario's five major cities – Greater Sudbury, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay and Timmins – have taken the time to join us.

I say it's a pleasure not because that's what every speaker is expected to say. For me, this is an opportunity to connect with you in person. To reinforce that our company's business doesn't begin and end in Montreal and Toronto and Vancouver.

We're all connected. That's the business we're in. In every community.

Our business is working with organizations like Contact North/*Contact Nord*. Because they, too, are connectors. Their role: making sure that training and education aren't stopped by barriers of distance. So my thanks to them for this opportunity.

I have a problem. From the agenda, it's clear you're expecting a technology speech.

In my mind, that means talk about gigabits per second, DSLAM, DSL, ADSL, ATM, DTH, Wi-MAX, 1XRTT, 802.16, MPLS – a whole alphabet of stuff in neither official language.

That's all fascinating. But I don't want to talk about that.

Rather, I want to talk about what we can do with technology. Its economic and social importance. What it means to our communities. For that is what really matters.

For example, imagine a television screen. On that screen, the face of a man about to have a doctor examine his throat. In fact, that is exactly what he's doing. Only the patient is in Pond Inlet. And the doctor is examining him by video conference . . . from his office . . . in Iqaluit. Far removed in miles and in travel time.

This is not tomorrow. This isn't a promise. This is today. And by the end of the year, we will be delivering the same capability to 25 communities in Nunavut.

Another image: a woman is wheeled into an operating theatre in North Bay, close to her home. At the same time, a surgeon – a world-leading authority on the woman's condition -- preps for the operation. But he's nowhere near North Bay. He's in his office in Hamilton, ready to guide a robot in delicate surgery hundreds of miles away.

No need for either patient or physician to travel. But the treatment: the best available.

Again, we're making this happen . . . today.

Two moments in time: the human face of the promise of technology.

At Bell, we believe in the promise of communications. Believe these technologies can help the North meet many of its unique challenges.

Can help build substantial, fully rounded communities. Make it a little easier for people to have a better life for themselves and their children.

That is what I want to talk about today.

Helping to build communities is something we at Bell take seriously. We have been part of this community for more than 100 years. In fact, our first office opened in April 1902, in the back of Herbert Young's drugstore, not 300 yards from here, at the corner of Cedar and Durham streets. That was 28 years before this city was incorporated. We've been working hard here ever since to help build this community. That's just the way we do business. Today and tomorrow. Partners in your community.

And when I say your community, I mean not just the greater Sudbury region, not just northern Ontario. I mean the North, with a capital N, from coast to coast. . . to coast.

When you think about it, all Canadians are northerners. People who handle issues every day that simply don't come up in other countries. Countries that are more densely populated. Countries with less geography. Countries where summer is not just two months of lousy skiing.

You know the issues better than I ever will. Distance. Lack of economic diversity. Fewer people to share the high cost of services. Communities that are devastated when the dominant employer can no longer make a go of it.

Bright, energetic young people who go elsewhere to get the education and jobs they want. To find the amenities that aren't available here. To build their careers and their families . . . away from home.

Communities that too often find themselves on the wrong side of the digital divide. Unable to attract the people and jobs they need to rejuvenate themselves. Unable to offer their native-born daughters and sons the same richness of opportunity that other Canadians accept as a given.

Yes, there are challenges. But there's a lot happening, too. Exciting, important things.

- The first new medical school in Ontario in more than 30 years. Campuses at Laurentian and Lakehead. Connected with technology to enable shared learning.
- Contact North/*Contact Nord* – reaching more than 100 communities. Attracting more than 15,000 course registrations. Growth in the double digits.

- The eDOME at Cambrian College that will electronically deliver modular education and training, potentially worldwide
- Neureka! The Northern Centre for Biotechnology and Clinical Research
- At Lakehead, the Advanced Technology and Academic Centre with leading-edge research labs and smart classrooms.

All signs of a community, a region, committed to renewal, committed to the future.

The change occurring in the communications industry will dovetail in a powerful way with your needs . . . and just as important, with your aspirations.

Making sure people in the North no longer have to just “make do”.

No question, technology is not a cure-all. But communications technologies do have an important role in creating opportunity . . . independent of geography. In enabling communities to build and rebuild themselves.

We’re seeing this already. Bell Canada alone has a list of initiatives as long as my arm.

Example: working with Industry Canada, we are extending high-speed Internet service to 10 First Nations communities in the Fort Frances area.

Example: our work with affiliate companies like Northern Tel, and with communities like North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and Timmins to diversify their employment bases by attracting major call centres . . . and hundreds of good jobs to the North.

Example: Northern Genesis. With Connect Ontario and three local partners, we’re building a community Internet portal for a group of communities that includes Thunder Bay, Dryden, Manitouwadge and Marathon.

Example: our involvement with the Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network – ORION for short – enabling real-time, collaborative research among all of Ontario’s colleges, universities and research organizations and their colleagues worldwide.

There are many more. The point is that, even today, there is a lot going on as we work to use communications technologies to help build communities.

Tomorrow, evolving technology will continue to change the landscape of the industry. And in many cases the North – not encumbered with outdated networks – will be able to leapfrog directly to the smartest, simplest, most advanced technologies.

I’m referring to Internet Protocol, or IP, which is emerging as the communications lingua franca of our generation. IP allows any device to connect to any other device to deliver any information in any format. Voice. Data. Video. Over essentially a single network.

Say you own a retail operation here in Sudbury. Today, you have 10 separate communications lines leaving your building. A couple of fax lines, four cash registers, three PBX lines and one for Internet access.

In an IP world, all that essentially collapses into a single router and a high-speed modem. A much simpler configuration. But much greater capability, including multimedia Internet capabilities. And productivity savings of up to 40 per cent.

If you plan to expand your market, regionally, nationally, even globally, IP gives you new, interactive ways to showcase your products over the Web.

But it's not just business. IP will fundamentally change the way people interact with each other, learn, get medical help . . . entertain themselves.

Laurentian University already has Bell Voice over IP technology up and working. Educators are connecting with students in new ways, regardless of distance. And students are innovating ways to do research . . . and collaborate.

IP makes more possible. In health care, the remote video throat examination between Pond Inlet and Iqaluit could well become the norm. Same for telerobotic surgery. Most effective treatments . . . available everywhere.

Think what IP could do for the quality of life in our northern communities. Simpler, smarter technology. Enabling children to see their home communities in a new light. As places where they can get the education they crave. Find the diversity of jobs they need. Stay to raise families.

IP will have equal power for government, creating more efficient and cost-effective ways to deliver services to and interact with constituents.

In fact, not having IP in the future will be like not having telephone service today. IP is that transformative. IP is that powerful.

But . . . there is always a but, isn't there . . . but there are a couple of issues.

One is regulatory. IP is creating a single, competitive marketplace. Telephone companies, cable companies, Internet service providers, satellite companies, fixed wireless providers, even electrical utilities are able to offer similar services.

This is good news. It enhances choice. Transfers power to the consumer . . . where it should be.

Yet the regulator is seriously considering applying the old telecom rules to this radically new reality. It's just not going to work. Because it risks slowing down a sector that has accounted for 60% of the productivity growth in our economy in the last decade.

Now is the time to fit the policy framework to the new reality of the telecom industry, which is one of Canada's great success stories. For policy makers, this must be a top priority.

The second brake on the potential of IP is access – or lack thereof, particularly for those who call the North home.

The IP world runs on broadband, on high-speed Internet access. Clearly, then, if we do not provide high-speed access to every community in the country, we are not delivering on the total promise of IP. We are not delivering for Canadians.

No question, there already exist valuable initiatives at both the federal and provincial government levels to extend broadband to more remote communities.

For our part, we continue to invest in our commitment to the north. For example, for the last two years, Northwestel has worked closely with Yukon's government to extend the broadband footprint. Today, using a combination of technologies including fixed wireless, we've extended high-speed Internet access to pass more than 90% of the homes in Yukon – among the highest penetration rates of anywhere in Canada.

We are also the prime contractor on the Government of Alberta's SuperNet project which will connect all 422 communities in that province over a state-of-the-art optical network.

But even at that, there will still be upwards of 1,700 communities across Canada without access to broadband at the end of next year.

That's too many communities on the dark side of the digital divide. We believe even more can be done, and faster, because the IP world is emerging at high speed.

So we are deepening our commitment.

Earlier this year we proposed to the CRTC a three-year program to extend our broadband service to over 1,000 rural and remote communities in our territory. At a cost of about \$150 million, this initiative complements existing federal and provincial plans. It targets communities that are not expected to get service without some form of incentive.

In the first year – next year if we get approval – we would extend broadband service to an additional 70,000 lines, almost 20,000 of which are in First Nations communities.

About a month from now, Telesat, another BCE company, will launch a satellite—Anik F2 -- to provide high-speed, state-of-the-art Internet access across the country – from coast to coast to coast.

It's designed especially to reach those areas that will not otherwise be adequately served by land-based technology. Allowing time for testing, we expect commercial and consumer services to be available in the October timeframe.

These are exciting developments. But they're only part of the picture. To fill in the blanks, we need stronger private and public sector partnerships. Co-ordinated and focused.

For that is what builds communities. Partnerships that engage the full range of expertise and energy – civic leaders, senior levels of government, local activists, the private sector.

I think right here in this room we have the makings of just such a partnership. That's why today I am asking one of Bell's most experienced senior Bell executives, Terry Mosey, to help bring to fruition an important idea from Contact North/*Contact Nord*. The job: organize a Northern Communities National Conference to address the technology access issue. From every conceivable perspective.

And do it fast. What a great way to develop a clear set of priorities . . . of actions . . . for the North to present to our government, and quickly . . . by the first quarter of 2005.

Terry is the Chairman of both Northwestel and Northern Tel. He knows the north. He knows telecom. The job will get done.

We know a single conference will not be enough. But it's a tangible next step.

No one person, no one company, no one government department or local interest group has all the answers. But together . . . who knows what can happen. For we are all northerners. And we've certainly overcome tougher challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen, I've talked about Bell's commitment. It's more than nice words.

We hope you see it in your communities every day, in many different ways. In people like Guy Brunet, recently honoured by the Greater Sudbury Chamber of Commerce as an Outstanding Employee of the Year.

Guy is one of our technicians who was involved in the installation of the Voice over IP service at Laurentian. This was one of the first and largest installations in North America. And, as with any innovative program, there were issues – lots of issues.

But Guy rose to the challenge. Even when he was told he needed major, critical surgery in the middle of the project, he stayed on the job. Right up to the day of his operation.

That's the commitment, the dedication I'm talking about. Not just the dedication of our people to our company. But their dedication to their customers. To their communities.

Simply put, serving customers. Connecting them.

That is our commitment. To partner with you. To help build our northern communities.

Merci. Thank you.