

## **High-Speed Internet Access Coming to Small-Town Alberta; Part of Growing Trend for Rural Communities to Take Broadband into Their Own Hands**

*Game-changing fibre project kicks off in Vermilion, the result of a successful grassroots effort to bring affordable service to the town at speeds comparable to those in major cities*

**VERMILION, ALBERTA – November 1, 2022:** The town of Vermilion, Alberta, and Alberta Broadband Networks, along with Primus Telecommunications, are thrilled to be kicking off one of the most advanced broadband projects rural Canada has seen. The project will bring badly needed fibre-based broadband internet access to the 4,000-person town, an agricultural community 200 kilometres east of Edmonton that, like many of Canada’s small towns and rural areas, has long been underserved by major internet providers.

When the service launches this fall, the town’s residents and businesses will see substantially faster download and upload speeds as well as improvements in reliability. They will also have affordable access to services that are as fast or even faster than what’s available in most major cities in Canada.

### **Today’s Ribbon-Cutting Event**

The project was officially celebrated at a ribbon-cutting ceremony earlier today at the Vermilion Regional Centre.

Attendees included mayors and dignitaries from surrounding communities; as well as local business and academic leaders.

### **How Vermilion Residents Can Sign Up**

Vermilion residents can visit [Primus.ca/Vermilion](https://Primus.ca/Vermilion) to learn more about the project, sign up to receive updates, and learn when their home will be eligible for this service.

### **Vermilion Town Council Determined to Keep Community Thriving**

While bringing broadband to small towns and rural areas is a major challenge—financially, logistically, politically—the town of Vermilion was determined to tackle the challenge head-on. The town’s efforts are part of a growing trend, grown out of neglect, of smaller communities taking the need for broadband services into their own hands.

“Council and I are very excited to provide a broadband fibre solution to our community. Our administration has worked tirelessly to turn this project into a reality, and we thank them for it. Through Alberta Broadband Networks, we are the first rural community in Alberta to provide our residents and businesses with a fibre solution, which will bring Vermilion tremendous opportunities for future investment and growth,” explains Vermilion Mayor Greg Thronson.

“We are committed to keeping our community growing and thriving,” says Mary Lee Prior, Vermilion’s Manager of Economic Development. “We know that in order to attract investors,

developers and entrepreneurs, retain local businesses, support existing residents and encourage new ones to move in, we have to solve our broadband issue.”

“Bringing one gigabit and greater speeds to Vermilion at rates similar to what’s available in major cities across the country speaks directly to the values at the heart of our company,” says Primus vice-president Jim Dawson. “At Primus, we have long been vocal about our belief in the need for fairness, affordability and great service in Canada’s telecom industry.”

### **A Basic Service for all Canadians, Yet Still a Challenge for Small/Rural Centres**

In late 2016, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) declared that broadband internet was a basic service for all Canadians, noting that connectivity improves quality of life, enhances economic prospects and encourages connected and engaged communities. This need has become even more pronounced since the pandemic began.

Year over year, more Albertans are using online health services via Alberta Health Services and accessing remote post-secondary learning options across the province, which are made possible by high-speed access. Broadband also gives graduating high school students a wider array of options, giving them the choice to stay at home with their families and take college or university courses remotely, which can be a much more financially viable option for many students.

Yet a significant number of Canadians in rural areas remain vastly underserved, with median rural download speeds 80 percent slower than in urban areas in 2022.

Alberta Broadband Networks is very excited to help bridge this digital divide by bringing affordable, high-speed internet access to Vermilion, in partnership with Primus.

### **About Town of Vermilion**

Vermilion is a dynamic and vibrant community strategically located on the crossroads of Yellowhead Highway #16 and Buffalo Trail Highway #41. Our picturesque community is home to Lakeland College and is within the heart of the Agricultural and Oil and Gas Industries in Northeast Alberta. Industrial, commercial, and residential investment opportunities are all immediately available. Our energetic arts and culture scene coupled with our Vermilion Provincial Park, our events and amenities and great health care provide a quality of life like no other. A cornerstone within the Alberta HUB region and the Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor, Vermilion is a leader in Economic Development winning provincial and national awards in Economic Development Sustainability. Vermilion has a broad vision and a thriving and sustainable future – Join us in Vermilion! [www.vermilion.ca](http://www.vermilion.ca) ~ ‘New Ideas For Living’

### **About Alberta Broadband Networks**

Alberta Broadband Networks is building fibre networks in local communities (Vermilion) to help ensure that every resident has access to a high speed internet connection on the principle of bridging the digital divide and everyone's right to fibre based internet access as a utility. Our deployment will see us route fibre infrastructure through several Alberta communities over the next five years. We are very excited to partner with the Town of Vermilion to bring this exciting new High Speed Utility infrastructure that will make Vermilion one of the most connected communities in Rural Alberta. Alberta Broadband Networks is making a significant investment locally through the development, engineering, construction and operation of fibre networks. For further information, please visit [Alberta Broadband Networks](#).

### **About Primus**

Primus is a national, award-winning, independent communications provider offering a wide range of consumer, business and wholesale communications services. In 2021, Primus was proud to join Distributel Communications, a certified Great Place to Work® known for its progressive, collaborative workplace. 100% Canadian-owned, with offices across the country and a national network. Primus is focused on doing what's right for Canadians—providing choice, value, fairness and accessibility to the country's telecom industry. Primus offers high speed internet, TV, mobile and home phone services through its consumer brands. It delivers business solutions as a provider of advanced voice and data offerings for the SMB and Enterprise markets throughout Canada. The company also forges new partnerships and brings innovative services to the wholesale market. For more information, visit [www.primus.ca](http://www.primus.ca).

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