

Broadband Communications in Eastern Ontario

Observations of the Impact on Rural Communities

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- Realistic comparison of the impact on “have” and “have not” communities
- Looked at 4 “haves” and 4 “have nots”

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- **“Haves”**
 - *Embrun, Carleton Place, Hawkesbury, Casselman*
- **“Have nots”**
 - *Merrickville, Spencerville, Lanark Highlands and Deep River*
- **Looked at impact elements**
 - *Individual/family, investor, business, public institution, community administration*

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- **Findings**
 - *Observable, significant impact on behaviour of all groups*
- **But difficult to assess metrics**
 - *Too early*
- **Necessary element of infrastructure**
 - *factor in community wellness*
- **Confusion over options**
 - *And responsibility*
 - *Incremental burden*

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- **Individual, family**
 - *Major factor in location decisions*
 - *Young families – education*
 - *Retiring couples – healthcare*
- **Some companies require home access**
- **Money is flowing to the side of the street with broadband**

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- **Investor**
 - *Business expansion and relocation*
 - *Very limited interest if no broadband*
 - *Major factor for economic development officers*
 - *Large companies will not even consider “have nots” – business and employee reasons*
- **Minimum 40% impact**

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- **Business**
 - *Businesses have closed*
 - *Franchises: non-negotiable requirement – autos, farm equipment*
 - *Growing dependency in agriculture; bio-based*
 - *Smooth seasonal cycles*
 - *New markets*
- **Minimum 30% impact**

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- **Public Institutions**
 - *Health*
 - *Retention of staff, local doctors*
 - *Access to expertise, regional services*
 - *Rural service delivery*
 - *Education*
 - *Not just service levels, but survival*
 - *New R&D opportunities, consulting opportunities*
- **Minimum 30% impact**

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- **Community administrations**
 - *Services to residents*
 - *Access to other levels of government*
 - *Shared systems, e.g. GIS*
 - *Systems support*
- **Need for education and expert advice**

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- From commuter-based to communications-based
 - *Redefining the urban-rural relationship through broadband*
 - *Opportunities for innovative economic development strategy*
 - *Linkages*

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- **Results should apply nationally**
- **Impacts are clearly observable**
 - *But too early for metrics*
- **Need for education and advice**
 - *Less study, more do*
- **Innovation through broadband for economic development**

Q & A

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