



**WELLAND HYDRO-ELECTRIC  
HOLDING CORP.**

**Media Release**

**Needs Assessment shows Welland well serviced with high speed internet services**

**Almost 98% of City has access to high speed internet**

**(Welland, ON) October 21, 2008** --- A new study shows that Welland is not only matching other communities in having the latest technologies of the digital age available to its homes, businesses and institutions, internet use by city residents is well above the national average.

The results of a high speed internet needs assessment, prepared by consultant Nexus Communications on behalf of Welland WiFi Corporation was presented this evening to Welland City Council. Welland WiFi Corp. is a subsidiary of Welland Hydro-Electric Holding Corporation and is wholly owned by the City of Welland.

The report shows that high speed internet is available to 97.8% of the City of Welland through current service providers such as Cogeco, Rogers and Bell. In terms of overall internet use, Welland is above or at the national and regional average. But in the residential sector, internet use is at 76% compared to 68% nationally and across the Niagara Region. The study shows that 67% of City residents are using high speed internet service, 9 percent are on dial-up, 4% have a computer but no internet and 20% have no computer.

Access to the ultra high speed fibre optic network, considered a key service to help attract new business and industry is also available in Welland. The City is connected to the Niagara Region Broadband Network which provides fibre optic service to schools, hospitals, municipalities and industries.

“This assessment shows that Welland is well positioned in terms of the latest communications technologies and is very competitive with other communities in terms of being a great place to live, to do business and play”, said Tim Clutterbuck, Chair, Welland Hydro-Electric Holding Corp. “This is, of course, an important message to get out in terms of attracting new investment to the City, in particular businesses and industries that require access to the latest technologies in order to operate successfully”.

Clutterbuck said there are still a number of opportunities available, particularly in the government sector to expand use of wireless internet technology (WiFi) or expand e-services to improve productivity, service delivery and the environment.

“Several cities have already done it or are in the process of making WiFi available everywhere in their community. In Welland, Welland WiFi Corp. has WiFi service available in several strategic locations and we are reviewing a number of options for the system”, Clutterbuck said.

Future uses for an expanded WiFi network for organizations including Welland Hydro-Electric System Corp. and the City of Welland include improved mobile applications for field staff. For example, staff could access drawings and GIS information right on site. It would allow automatic meter reading and expand available e-services for residents and business to do things such as access more information, pay fines and purchase licenses on-line.

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