

*The Corporation of the*  
***Municipality of Huron Shores***



Office of the Mayor

02 December 2020  
via email

Dear First Nation Chiefs, Municipal Mayors and Councils:

***RE: Community Owned Regional Broadband Network  
Universal Broad Fund  
Update Number 4***

The Municipality of Huron Shores, its Ad Hoc Broadband Committee and the presentation team have been very busy the past few months, engaging with the public and private sector to ensure H&M COFI meets your Internet requirements for many years to come. This letter serves to update you on our applications' progress and provide a reminder of why a Community Owned Fibre Infrastructure is the best for our region.

We were delighted to receive the news of the approval for Stage Two of our project for the Government of Ontario's Improving Connectivity for Ontario (ICON) program. The team is now completing the detailed submission due, in part, by 11 December, with final details in mid-January. A successful ICON application could provide up to 25% funding for H&M COFI.

The Federal Government recently announced its Universal Broadband Fund (UBF), which we have all been waiting for. We are in the process of preparing our submission for the UBF grants and expect to include a proposal for the Rapid Response Stream. Before the announcement and following it, the presentation team met with a multitude of ministers and their staff at provincial and federal levels of government involved with Internet broadband. Presentations have been to FedNor Staff, Universal Broadband Fund (UBF) Staff, Parliamentary Secretary MP Terry Sheehan, Minister Greg Rickford and Minister Maryam Monsef. I explained why a community-owned network is the best solution for our region, and all feedback was positive. Given the comments I received from our attendees to the recent Canadian Rural and Remote Broadband Conference and other Rural Broadband announcement events, many leaders at all three government levels are affirming the benefits of community ownership.

If you have been listening to regional morning radio, I have been interviewed and presented our case in a public forum. Several local and regional newspapers have carried interviews regarding H&M COFI, all with the intent of getting the word out. Through these interviews, I learned of Hearst Connect, a small community-owned fibre network that brings broadband Internet to their community and ensures those funds remain in their municipality.

The realization of H&M COFI seeks to bring gigabit data rates to our homes and businesses with no data caps while ensuring 100% coverage for the region. The H&M COFI, municipal level corporation, will own the infrastructure and allow any viable Internet Service Provider (ISP) to operate on the network. The ability to choose an ISP will enable homes and businesses to select one that best meets their budget and specialty package offerings. H&M COFI will charge a floor price, wholesale price, if you will, with the profits returning to the community. We should ask ourselves, why would we not want a share of the revenue the telecommunication dollar spent in the region.

The Municipality of Huron Shores has posted H&M COFI information as well as links to its partners. This information expands on and explains the benefits of a community-owned network. Also, in partnership with ROCK Networks, a data collection tool will soon be available for homes and businesses to register for additional information regarding the performances and pricing models we expect to be available. The registry will allow future customers to obtain information about H&M COFI and its benefits to the communities and region.

The link to the H&M COFI webpage is as follows:

<https://huronshores.ca/government/council/boards-and-committees/hm-cofi-project/>

With events occurring quickly, H&M COFI is asking that whenever you have a chance to lobby on our behalf, please do so. It directly benefits you and your constituents. We request that you provide a link on your respective websites to the H&M COFI information website. We would also greatly appreciate hearing from the Municipalities and First Nations who have not yet supplied Clerk/Administrator Tonelli ([debbie@huronshores.ca](mailto:debbie@huronshores.ca)) with your contact information.

In summary, a lot has occurred over the past few months and we are getting the word out. H&M COFI is proceeding with funding applications and your support is key to that success. Lastly, H&M COFI is about guaranteeing our future through true broadband internet for the region. It will, in turn, ensure our best and brightest remain or return to the region and help grow our communities.

Yours truly,



Georges Bilodeau  
Mayor

Distribution List: attached

## DISTRIBUTION LIST

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- Meldrum Bay (unincorporated) – [catmyle@gmail.com](mailto:catmyle@gmail.com)

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#### FIRST NATIONS (for Chief and Band Council)

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