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South Saskatchewan Ready Funds Rural Broadband Initiative

Coronach, Sask. – Today, South Saskatchewan Ready announced it has approved funding up to \$327,000 dollars for an important rural broadband initiative in the five partner Rural Municipalities. The South Saskatchewan Ready organization has partnered with Wood River Controls of Lafleche, Saskatchewan, to provide a minimum of 50/10 mbps set as the minimum standard by the Government of Canada.

At present, there is insufficient rural internet service in the south-central region of Saskatchewan to support the transition to a post-coal economy when the forced closure of the Poplar River Power Station occurs in 2030. The South Saskatchewan Ready Partnership (SSR) will be unable to attract investment required to regenerate the regional economy without access to better services. Without bandwidth comparable to other rural communities, new businesses in rural regions will not be able to achieve the levels of competitiveness needed to succeed, thus, the likelihood of increased economic development for major initiatives will be very low.

Online business, social connection and education and training has been advanced significantly since the beginning of the pandemic. Health and safety, economic lockdowns, and citizens without elevated services are falling behind economically. The provision of a sufficient communications network access will provide the region with a much-needed economic boost and a gateway to future development opportunities.

“Better bandwidth access in our partnership rural municipalities will have a direct positive impact on farming operations and other businesses that will aid in the mitigation of the negative economic impacts of Federally mandated coal transition in the region,” said Kyron Manske, Vice-Chair, South Saskatchewan Ready.

“As we identified in our sector level feasibility study for the region, high speed internet is integral for the economic development of Saskatchewan’s rural economy. With this announcement, the local communities will achieve a high degree of citizen satisfaction and a continuation of commercial growth potential. This is a foundational building block to enable South Saskatchewan Ready to focus on their long-term community growth plan,” said Lorne Boyle, Principal, Mandate Consulting Ltd.



“Wood River Controls is excited to work with our partners in South Saskatchewan Ready to provide elevated levels of bandwidth to rural customers meeting the Federal government’s mandate of 50/10 bandwidth services for rural customers in the RM’s of Hart Butte, Happy Valley, Poplar Valley, Bengough and Willow Bunch. Expanded bandwidth will benefit rural farms, businesses and residents with better access and faster speeds to meet their needs,” said John De Graauw, President, Wood River Controls.

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