

Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link Project – May 2015 Community Update

Introduction to the Project

The Mackenzie Valley Fibre Link (MVFL) project is a Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) initiative to provide a state-of-the-art high speed fibre optic telecommunications link along the Mackenzie Valley and Beaufort Delta. The MVFL project involves the installation of 1,154 km (717 miles) of high-speed fibre optic telecommunications cable from McGill Lake to Inuvik, connecting communities along the Mackenzie Valley with Canada's high speed fibre optic backbone network. Following the completion of the Inuvik-Tuktoyaktuk Highway, the fibre route will be extended from Inuvik to Tuktoyaktuk.

In October 2014, the GNWT entered into a 20 year Project Agreement with Northern Lights General Partnership (NLGP) to deliver the project, a consortium comprised of Leducor as the construction partner and NorthwesTel as the service provider.

Winter 2015 Construction Phase Complete

The first winter construction season of the MVFL project has concluded with over 430 km of fibre optic cable installed. Though this construction season faced some initial challenges, it was successful with just over one third of the route completed. The map on page two outlines what has been built to date and what is planned for summer 2015 and winter 2016.

The winter build took place between January and March 2015, with five crews active at any one time between Tulita and Inuvik. Favourable winter conditions provided construction crews with sufficient snow pack and frozen ground to help remain within permit conditions and to minimize environmental and wildlife impacts. Local Environmental Monitors were also employed with each crew to ensure plans were properly carried out in the field. The environmental plans and precautions were successfully implemented and the construction team completed this season without any significant health, safety, or environmental incidents.

Cable installation was completed at the Great Bear, one of the four major river crossings on the project. However, challenging geotechnical conditions were discovered at the Rabbitskin and Liard rivers and the project team is currently analysing geotechnical data and investigating alternative solutions.

MVFL WINTER 2015 BUILD HIGHLIGHTS

- Completion of approximately 430 km of the 1,154 km fibre optic route
- Completion of the build at 20 of the 32 bridge crossings along the winter road
- Cable installation at the Great Bear River was completed via Horizontal Directional Drill (HDD)
- Aerial construction on power poles is complete in Fort Good Hope, Norman Wells, and Tulita
- Splicing and testing of the cable at approximately 53 splice points
- Mobilized a team which peaked at 75 field workers at one time
- Strong health and safety performance with no serious incidents
- Reached substantial completion of the cable route design
- Employed approximately 112 local people on the project and used over 21 local contractors and suppliers
- Successfully demobilized or staged all equipment and materials at the end of the build season

In late March, the project team began demobilizing people and equipment to close-out the first winter build season. Since completing the final demobilization tasks in the first week of April, construction activities on the project have wrapped-up.



Summer 2015 Construction

The next construction season is expected to begin in late-June 2015 on the all-weather road between Wrigley and McGill Lake. The project team will be engaging the communities along the all-weather road to discuss construction plans in more detail, including a schedule of activities, traffic control plans, drilling plans, and opportunities for local workers and suppliers. There will also be fibre placed on existing power poles in Inuvik, Wrigley, and Fort Simpson this summer.

MVFL Community Benefits

The MVFL project offers significant benefits to communities along the Mackenzie Valley route (Inuvik, Fort Simpson, Wrigley, Tulita, Norman Wells and Fort Good Hope) as well as the entire NWT. These benefits include:

1. Improvements in the delivery of health, education, and social services as the MVFL system will provide significant increases in bandwidth that will allow the GNWT to enhance their government programs and services along the Mackenzie Valley.
2. Enabling Infrastructure to support both short and long term needs of local communities and local businesses.
3. Infrastructure that will be equally available to any potential user or local ISP Operator.
4. Support sustainable economic development and the growth of the Inuvik Satellite Station Facility (ISSF), Aurora Research Institute, and the NWT resource industry.

The design-build phase of the MVFL project is expected to be completed by September 2016, with service available thereafter.

Future Community Visit

Representatives from the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) and NLGP will be contacting community representatives along the Mackenzie Valley to arrange meetings and discuss future MVFL construction phases, as well as the benefits and how we can better facilitate community engagement on the project. We propose to hold these meetings at the convenience of each community, between the months of May-September 2015.

For construction advisories, project updates, and project photos, please visit external project website for MVFL available at www.mvflproject.com.

Contacts

For more information on the MVFL Project, please contact:

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MVFL COMMUNITY BENEFIT HIGHLIGHTS

- Once completed, the MVFL project will bring improved telecommunications and internet access to communities in the Mackenzie Valley
- Provide jobs, training, and economic growth for local communities
- Enable improved delivery of health, education, and social services programs
- Facilitate development opportunities for the Inuvik Satellite Station Facility

MVFL Winter 2015 Construction Photos



A T555 saw cutting the cable trench south of Inuvik.



Quality assurance review of the cable plough installation on the wilderness segment of the build.



Quality assurance review of trench depth.