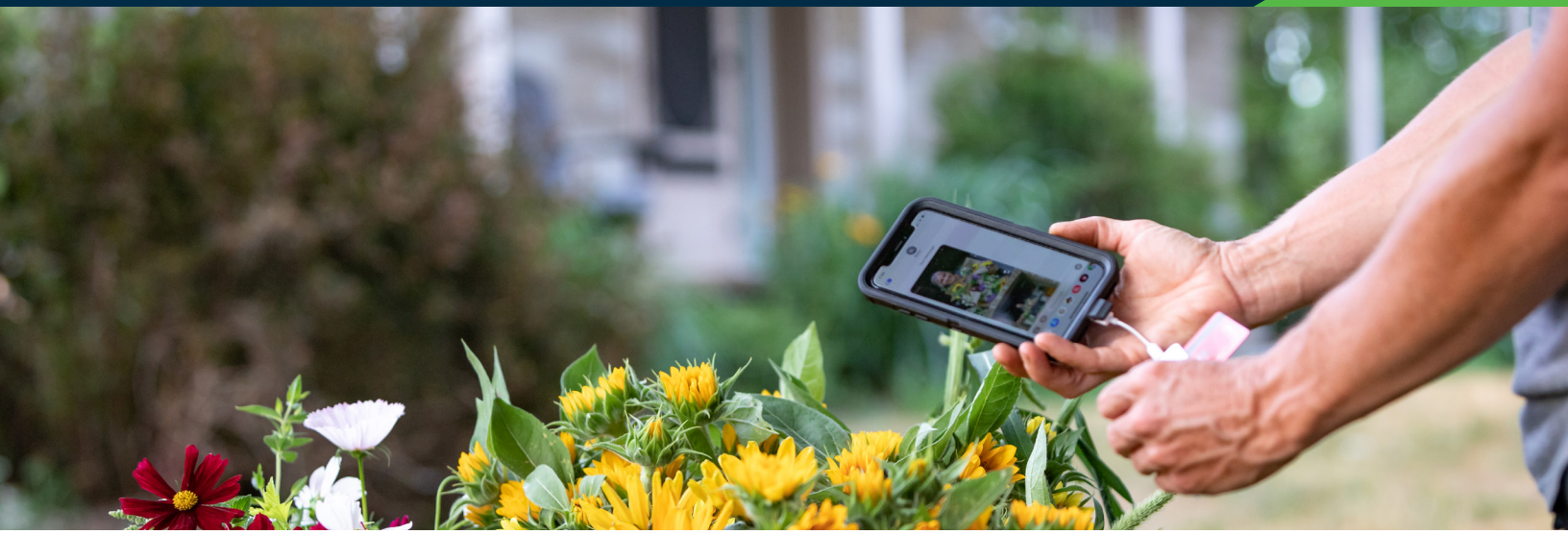
EORN Newsletter

Volume 1 | Fall 2020



It's an exciting time at the Eastern Ontario Regional Network (EORN) as we get closer and closer to having shovels in the ground, aiming to drastically improve cell phone coverage and capacity in the areas of eastern Ontario where people live, work and travel. We hope you enjoy this update and please encourage others to sign up for the newsletter as well.

A message from the board

Welcome to the first edition of the EORN newsletter. I'm glad to see this publication come to fruition at a very important time for our organization and eastern Ontario as a whole. While we are all living and working in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff at EORN have continued to meet deadlines associated with our $213 million Cell Gap Project. We will provide an update on the Cell Gap Project further down in this newsletter.

While we remain committed to achieving exceptional cell coverage in eastern Ontario, we are also looking ahead to improving broadband. This is why we are asking all levels of government to support the newly proposed EORN Gig Project, an endeavour that would see internet in our region fixed for an entire generation.

Please read more on the EORN Gig Project below. Thank you for your interest in EORN.

J. Murray Jones
Chair of the EORN Board of Directors

EORN Chairman J. Murray Jones with Premier Doug Ford at an event in Peterborough in August.

Cell Gap Project

"At this critical time it's important that all Canadians can stay connected through reliable cell service and high-speed internet. This important project will bring mobile service to more than 100 communities and over 1 million people across Eastern Ontario and ensure that residents and businesses have better access to online services and tools."

The Honourable Maryam Monsef, Minister of Women and Gender Equality and Rural Economic Development

Objectives

In April this year we issued a request for proposal to tackle cellular dead zones across eastern Ontario. With it our region became one step closer to improved cellular services that will help rural communities take part in the digital economy, create jobs and improve public safety.

The project aims to achieve these cell phone targets in areas of eastern Ontario where people live, work and travel:

- 99 per cent coverage of basic voice service such as day to day calls
- 95 per cent coverage with standard data services such as email, web browsing and social media
- 85 per cent coverage with high demand data services such as video conferencing and moviestreaming

Submissions for the Cell Gap Project were received September 3 and EORN staff is currently going through an extensive evaluation process. More information will be announced later this year.

EORN Gig Project proposal

The EORN Gig Project is a proposed project to bring ultra-high-speed internet to eastern Ontario. Today's digital economy is key to the economic development of rural regions. The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the massive divide between rural and urban Canadians when it comes to accessing high-speed internet services. Rural residents need high-speed broadband to work from home, participate in online education and access online medical care. In a recent business survey conducted by the Eastern Ontario Leadership Council (EOLC), 57 per cent of the more than 250 participants identified internet connectivity and high-speed internet as the most significant barrier to growth in our region. The EORN Gig Project is a proposed solution that would fix broadband in eastern Ontario for a generation. Why invest now in previously proposed technology that would only provide us with broadband at speeds of 50 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload by 2030 or 2035? By that time, the proposed technology will be outdated again. The cost to get 1 Gbps service to 95 per cent of the residences and businesses in eastern Ontario could be as high as $1.6 billion.

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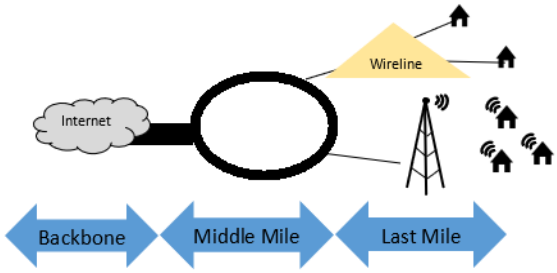
Tech corner

At EORN we spend a lot of time analyzing data and developing models that are ultimately meant to help improved cell coverage and capacity as well as broadband. It can be challenging to "translate" some of the technicalities of our industry. In each edition of the EORN newsletter we'll try to unravel the mystery around one technical term. In this issue we'll talk about ***"the last mile"****.*

The term last mile is often used when describing the process of delivering internet (also known as broadband) to homes. It is the final leg of a telecommunications network that delivers the service to the customers. When introducing the last mile, it comes with two other terms, namely: the middle mile and the backbone. The backbone of a network is the major data routes in a telecom service provider's (TSP) infrastructure. This is most often a network made of thick fibre cables through which data travels in the form of light. The major routes bring the data to "access points" where TSPs will take it and bring it as close to the home as they can get. That section (from the back bone to the last mile) is called middle mile. Now that the data is close to the home, it needs to get across the final hurdle, the last mile. This can be achieved in various ways but let us pick the two most common ones. First, the last mile can be delivered wirelessly. The data has made it to a tower near you and from there will be transmitted through radio frequencies to your home. This is known as fixed wireless. Fixed wireless can have a range of approximately 15 kilometres (so actually more than a mile!) depending on several factors including the height of the tower and the terrain over which the signal travels. The other main way of getting across the last mile is through another cable, for example an "old fashioned" copper phone cable or another fibre option. Each option has its own pros and cons depending on use. So there you have it.



Your questions answered

Every day we receive emails from residents in eastern Ontario with questions about cell and broadband issues. In this newsletter we'll highlight and answer one of your questions.

Question

I recently bought a home and our cell service is terrible. We know that EORN is working on a cell project, but how do you determine where service will be improved?

Answer

EORN used data from the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) to create a "demand area" map, which is where homes, businesses and major roads can be found. MPAC has the most reliable and detailed data available on residential, commercial and industrial properties, as well as whether properties are multi-unit or seasonal. This data identified demand areas where EORN wants to see new or improved services. For more information on our project, visit www.eorn.ca/cell.

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