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GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES COMMUNITY CELLULAR SERVICE PROVIDER

WHITEHORSE – The Government of Yukon has announced the successful service provider from its recent competitive proposal process for the cellular component of the Mobile Communications Solution (MoCS). A company jointly owned between Northwestel Inc. and Dakwakada Development Corporation will begin implementing enhanced cellular coverage to 17 Yukon communities commencing in 2006.

“This announcement brings an improved and expanded wireless communications technology to the Yukon, which will greatly benefit all citizens throughout the territory,” Highways and Public Works Minister Glenn Hart said. He added that once the project is in full operation, the cellular network will be in line with the major centers in southern Canada and act as a model for the rest of northern Canada.

“This decision demonstrates this government’s commitment to maintaining the Yukon’s position as a progressive territory with the infrastructure in place to maintain economic success,” Hart said. “This announcement will mean many new opportunities within the Yukon. The introduction of cellular service to 17 Yukon communities means that the territory has another essential communications element needed for rural development and regional economic growth.”

The Northwestel-Dakwakada team, as owner of the new cell system, will have the obligation to operate, maintain, and improve this system over a 12-year service agreement as outlined in government’s requirements for the cellular system.

“This project represents an exciting new opportunity for Northwestel and its partner, and we are naturally very pleased that our proposal was selected,” vice-president corporate of Northwestel Ray Wells said. “The expansion of cellular service throughout the territory demonstrates the Government of Yukon’s continued leadership and commitment to improving the quality of life for Yukoners and economic development.”

“We are looking forward to working with our partner, Dakwakada Development Corporation, on the construction and implementation of this new communications network. More specific details on the timing of the provision of service to the various communities will be provided in early 2006,” Wells added.

Dakwakada Development Corporation (DDC), the business arm of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN), is very happy to have been awarded this project in partnership with Northwestel. As CAFN Chief James Allen stated earlier this year, “We are pleased to partner with such a highly regarded company as Northwestel to make a meaningful difference for our citizens and all Yukoners.

“The technical and business expertise of Northwestel combined with the management and local experience of DDC ensures that this project will enjoy excellent results for all Yukoners” DDC general manager Kevin Sullivan said.

Today's announcement addresses the cellular component of the MoCS project only. A public request for proposals will be issued to address the equipment required for the mobile radio system component of the MoCS project. More information will follow regarding MoCS replacing the aging MDMRS system.

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