



## **PomeGran Group and Broadband Communications North Secure Federal Funding to Boost Connectivity in Remote Indigenous Regions**

THOMPSON, MB, March 7, 2024 /CNW/ - PomeGran Inc., via its subsidiary ROCK Networks, a leading broadband service provider, and Broadband Communications North (BCN), Manitoba's largest Indigenous network, have received \$7.5 million in funding from the federal government to deliver cellular and data service to eight remote Indigenous communities in Northern Manitoba. The funding, announced yesterday by the Honourable Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development and Minister responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, heralds a new era of connectivity for these underserved regions.

This funding from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), combined with additional funding from other sources, enables PomeGran and BCN to begin the next phase in a project to bring improved connectivity to 18 Indigenous communities across Northern Manitoba.

Powered by low-earth-orbit (LEO) satellites from Eutelsat OneWeb, phase 2 will bring cellular connectivity to Barren Lands First Nation, Northlands Denesuline First Nation, Poplar River First Nation, Mathias Colomb Cree Nation, Shamattawa First Nation, Sayisi Dene Denesuline Nation, Mosakahiken Cree Nation, and Bloodvein First Nation.

"This funding announcement is a game-changer for connectivity in our communities," said Jason Neepin, Executive Director of BCN. "Partnering with ROCK Networks and receiving support from the federal government demonstrates our collective dedication to bridging the digital divide. The expansion of cellular and data services to our most remote areas signifies a major step forward in addressing the service gap that many of our communities face. This investment sets the stage for transformational change, unlocking a wealth of opportunities for education, healthcare, and economic growth."

"Phase 2 of our project marks a significant milestone in our journey towards enhancing connectivity and empowering communities," said Brent Johnston, CEO of PomeGran. "With crucial funding support, we're not only expanding access, but also fostering sustainable economic growth. Together, we're building a bridge to a more connected and prosperous future for all."

"We're thrilled to have supported BCN in securing this funding, which highlights our ongoing commitment, alongside the Government of Canada, to extend high-speed Internet to Indigenous communities in Canada," said Joe Hickey, President of PomeGran. "This funding represents a pivotal milestone in our mission to enhance connectivity in these communities. With this support, ROCK Networks and BCN will be able to accelerate the deployment of cellular and data services, ensuring that residents have access to essential communication tools taken for granted in urban areas."

In 2022, ROCK Networks and BCN, in partnership with Eutelsat OneWeb, announced the first phase of a pilot project to deliver high-speed Internet connectivity to the Manto Sipi Cree Nation.



**About PomeGran Inc.:**

PomeGran Inc. stands as one of North America's foremost fibre-centric broadband infrastructure providers. Dedicated to enhancing broadband services, PomeGran has emerged as a leader on a mission to empower underserved markets in Eastern Canada and the Northeastern US. Boasting ownership of broadband networks, underground and aerial fibre assets, and fixed wireless access (FWA) assets, PomeGran is committed to bridging the digital divide that exists between urban, rural, and Indigenous communities. Founded on the fundamental principle of ensuring equitable access to high-speed Internet, PomeGran believes that everyone deserves the opportunity to participate in today's digital-first economy. To delve deeper into PomeGran's vision and initiatives, please visit [www.pomegran.com](http://www.pomegran.com).

**About BCN:**

Broadband Communications North Inc. (BCN) is a not-for-profit network that provides high-speed broadband connectivity to rural, northern, and remote communities in Manitoba. Established in 2002, BCN is one of the largest First Nations community networks in Canada and provides access to critical services like health care and education.

**For further information contact:**

[media@pomegran.com](mailto:media@pomegran.com)