

Xplornet has the solution for rural Internet woes

Over the last two decades, the Internet has gone from being something that was an added privilege to being a necessity for nearly all businesses and residents to use. For those living or operating a business in rural areas, it can be a challenge to get reliable, affordable service that meets the needs of the present-day Internet consumer.

That's where Xplornet comes in. The company, which tags themselves as a reliable and rural high-speed solution, focuses on providing the best possible solution to rural customers.

"Our bread and butter for the last ten years has been working to get rural communities connected," said Andrew Clemens, Ontario Regional Marketing Manager at Xplornet. "We look at getting them connected through the most viable service for them, whether it's 4G Satellite or a 4G Fixed Wireless tower solution."

Xplornet provides Internet service to rural communities across Canada, from coast-to-coast. They can service virtually all communities across Canada. They utilize both towers and satellites to provide speeds of up to 10 mbps (megabits per second), which is a drastic increase over the current dial-up and other options available to rural consumers.

"We want to be focused on giving every Canadian the opportunity to have that lifestyle and that opportunity to go onto the Internet and enjoy what they want to enjoy," added Chris Harlund, Director of Sales - Ontario for Xplornet, and a proud resident of Shelburne. "We want them to have the same kind of access as those who live in urban areas. People who live in rural areas are looking for that equal playing field, and that's important."

He added that living in the area has helped him to further understand not only the struggles facing Internet consumers in the area, but what kinds of solutions are viable as well.

Recently, the Mono Sustainability Advisory Council announced that plans to bring high speed Internet access to Mono were not feasible, bringing the search back to square one. According to Mr. Clemens and Mr. Harlund at Xplornet however, the solution could be closer than MSAC thought.

"We have the same kinds of challenges with Mono as we do with cottage country residents, but we have great resources in place to ensure that we have the right solution for everyone," explained Mr. Harlund. "We work together with them to ensure we provide them with the best option."

Mr. Clemens added that due to the topography of the Town of Mono and the distance between residents, satellite connections are typically going to provide the most reliability to those consumers. He explained that while some customers may be worried that satellite is not as good a service as towers, both provide the same level of service.

"They're high speed satellites as well, so they're on a 4G network with a 10 mbps speed, just like the tower would get," he said. "We have had residents say they want the tower because they believe it's faster but the reality is they're both the same speed. They're going to vary depending on the line of sight from either option, but they will both deliver up to the same speed and they both have good data options."

Recently, Xplornet announced a three year plan to increase the speeds of broadband Internet to rural residents from their current 5-10 mbps capabilities to a 25 mbps speeds, which were at one point thought to be near impossible for rural communities. The announcement, which was made on July 28th, stated that Xplornet will be able to provide those 25 megabit speeds to 100 percent of their rural customers by 2017.

"Launching the LTE (Long Term Evolution) network is a game changer for us because of the increase from 10 megabits to 25, which is a huge difference," said Mr. Clemens. "I know some people who don't even get 25 mbps in urban areas, so this is a really big deal."

The plan for expansion doesn't stop there either. One thing Xplornet prides itself in is the fact that their continuing goals are to grow with the demands and find ways to provide the same level of speeds and usage to rural customers as are available on some of the best options for urban customers. That means at some point, rural users could see speeds of over 100 mbps on their networks.

"Xplornet is a company that is really pushing to support the rural lifestyle," said Mr. Harlund. "We want people to know that we are really working hard and making a commitment to grow with our clients in the future. What we're going to deliver tomorrow will provide the same possibilities that people who live in urban areas have access too. This is not just a short-term game, we want to invest in the future of our clients."

Xplornet has been in business for nearly ten years now, and continues to strive towards their goal of providing 100 percent of Canadian, rural residents with a broadband service that they can rely on for all kinds of uses.

"We're here to support and grow with our customers in rural Canada," said Mr. Clemens. "We have the services that most residents and businesses need today, but we're going to continue to reinvest in our network so that we can provide rural communities with the

services they need going forward too.?

By Tabitha Wells