

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **SWIFT initiative receives major boost from federal and provincial governments**

**Midhurst/ July 26, 2016** – Simcoe County residents are one step closer to receiving improved access to ultra-high speed broadband internet connectivity. County of Simcoe Warden Gerry Marshall attended a funding announcement in London, Ontario today where the governments of Canada and Ontario jointly committed \$180 million to support the development of the Southwestern Ontario Integrated Fibre Technology (SWIFT) Network project. Canada and Ontario will each provide up to \$90 million towards the total project cost of approximately \$281 million. The County of Simcoe committed \$2.5 million between 2015-2019.

The SWIFT project was created by the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC), a not-for-profit organization representing 15 upper and single tier municipalities in Southwestern Ontario. Warden Gerry Marshall serves as Vice Chair of the WOWC and Chair of the SWIFT Initiative Sub-Committee.

"This is a major victory for all our residents and businesses currently underserved or with limited access to high speed internet," said Warden Marshall. "I applaud the federal and provincial governments for truly stepping up and supporting small-town, rural Ontarians. SWIFT is a forward-looking solution that will help make our businesses more competitive and create greater equality in terms of access to reliable and affordable internet connectivity across the entire county."

SWIFT understands that the market alone is not meeting the need for improved connectivity and growing bandwidth demands in Southwestern Ontario. The project will help communities and businesses in Simcoe County better compete in global markets, attract new jobs and improve quality of life. It will also allow individuals to use online resources to gain skills and experience. SWIFT will create an extensive fibre network that connects the entire region with service ranging from 1 Gbps up to 100 Gbps, using a combination of public and private funding. Here's how it works:

- SWIFT will build on existing fibre to create a far-reaching regional fibre network. The project will leverage government and broader public sector organization (i.e., schools and healthcare centres) to serve as anchor tenants of the network. This strategy will bring fibre closer to customers and will make it easier for independent service providers (ISPs) to connect homes and businesses to ultra-high-speed internet
- SWIFT will direct funding – from municipal, provincial and federal governments - to address gaps in broadband infrastructure that are leaving some communities behind. The new funding will trigger private investment from ISPs, who will continue to own and operate their networks and deliver services directly to customers
- All ISPs will have equal access to the fibre network, leveling the playing field and creating a more competitive marketplace. That will better serve urban and rural communities

In addition to the member municipalities of the WOWC, including County of Simcoe, the Region of Niagara, Town of Caledon and City of Orillia are also supporting the SWIFT project. SWIFT has also received support from the Southern First Nations Secretariat, school boards, colleges, universities and health care organizations.

To view the full federal and provincial government announcement and funding details, please visit <https://news.ontario.ca/moi/en/2016/7/ultra-high-speed-internet-coming-to-300-communities-in-southwestern-ontario.html>

For more information about the SWIFT project, visit [www.swiftnetwork.ca](http://www.swiftnetwork.ca).

The Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus Inc. (WOWC) is a not-for-profit organization representing 15 upper and single tier municipalities in Southwestern Ontario with more than three million residents. Its purpose is to enhance the prosperity and overall wellbeing of rural and small urban communities across the region. Caucus members work collectively to influence federal, provincial and municipal legislative, regulatory and program initiatives through advocacy, research and analysis and education.

The County of Simcoe is composed of sixteen member municipalities and provides crucial public services to County residents in addition to providing paramedic and social services to the separated cities of Barrie and Orillia. Visit our website at [simcoe.ca](http://simcoe.ca).

- 30 -

**Allan Greenwood**  
Director, Corporate Communications  
705-726-9300 ext. 1230  
705-794-9301 (mobile)  
[Allan.Greenwood@simcoe.ca](mailto:Allan.Greenwood@simcoe.ca)

**Collin Matanowitsch**  
Communications Co-ordinator  
705-726-9300 ext. 1430  
705-734-8386 (mobile)  
[Collin.Matanowitsch@simcoe.ca](mailto:Collin.Matanowitsch@simcoe.ca)



County of Simcoe Warden Gerry Marshall joined federal and provincial Ministers and other municipal leaders in London, Ontario today to announce \$180 million in federal and provincial funding to support the SWIFT project.