



DISTINCT
Infrastructure Group



NEWS RELEASE

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NEW JOINT VENTURE ANNOUNCED TO BUILD INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY IN MANITOBA FIRST NATIONS

TREATY ONE TERRITORY, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA – Today, Clear Sky Connections announced a new joint venture that will bring high speed internet to First Nations and surrounding communities across Manitoba. The Distinct Infrastructure Group Inc. (DIG) and Broadband Communications North Inc. (BCN) have partnered with Clear Sky Connections (CSC) to develop the physical and technical infrastructure required for the large-scale project that will bring affordable, reliable high-speed internet to many communities across Manitoba.

The newly formed group of the three partners known as “Clear Sky Indigenous Network,” are moving forward with the work to complete the network and are continuing to acquire full provincial and federal financial support in making this a reality. As part of the process, CSC has been sharing information and working with First Nations to ensure they are engaged as per the Duty to Consult, and can participate in opportunities associated with the network. The projected date of the first communities to be connected through this initiative is within the next year pending all financial commitments are in place.

QUOTES:

“This important partnership is another step towards connectivity in many of our communities who do not have reliable, affordable internet. We have been left behind with respect to technology, but today we are looking forward to having the same access to the internet and the technologies and opportunities that come with it.”

- Chief Nelson Genaille, Sapotaweyak Cree Nation and Clear Sky Connections Chairperson

“It is imperative that we as First Nations take the lead in initiatives to build capacity in our communities and for us to own the infrastructure that is being built. We have pushed for Ownership, Control, Access and Possession of our own network and initiative since we started this plan over 10 years ago via mandate by the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. It is exciting for us to venture forth in a new model that merges with two distinct companies that have the expertise and skillset to bring the plan to fruition along with our team.”

- Chief David Crate, Fisher River Cree Nation and Clear Sky Connections Vice-Chairperson

“DIG is pleased to announce a significant and long term partnership with CSC and BCN, bringing our years of technical, design and network construction expertise to this essential project. DIG is a 100% Canadian owned and operated premier design build construction company based in Winnipeg and Toronto. Our Mission Statement is “To be responsive to the current and future needs of our clients to deliver safe, turnkey utility, telecom and infrastructure solutions that positively impacts the communities in which we live and work.” We are passionate about connecting the world to our clients and our values are the building blocks; Integrated Safety Culture, Client



Centered, Integrity, Excellence, Entrepreneurial Spirit, Passion/Excitement and to always be Forward Focused, which are in lock step with this project.

DIG has been engaged with our partners as they develop and shape a sustainable, economical and Indigenous owned telecommunications network for the Northern Manitoba communities. In keeping with our philosophy and values, upon completion, this network will be owned by the Indigenous community and will be structured for ongoing growth and sustainability. Using our Crown Utilities Division here in Winnipeg and our local workforce, DIG looks forward to expanding our presence by employing locally sourced labour and management. We are also pleased that the onboarding and training of our newly added team members will take place right here in Winnipeg and throughout the communities as we build not only a fiber network but a well-trained and sustainably employed workforce.”

– Joe Lanni and Alex Agius, Co-CEOs of Distinct Infrastructure Group (DIG Inc.)

“The single greatest challenge in keeping First Nations communities connected to the global economy is availability of quality backbone infrastructure. BCN is excited to align this with our last mile expertise and profit sharing model.”

– Ken Sanderson, Executive Director of Broadband Communications North Inc.

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About the Partners

Clear Sky Connections (CSC) is the largest Indigenous-owned telecommunications network in Canada implementing high-speed internet connectivity which will deploy thousands of kilometers of fiber optic cable into all Manitoba First Nations (MFNs).

Distinct Infrastructure Group (DIG) is a turnkey solutions firm providing design, engineering, construction and maintenance services to telecommunication firms, utilities and government bodies. Distinct's full service suite of offerings includes underground construction, aerial construction, inventory management, and technical services including fibre to the building and home. The Company's head offices are in Toronto, Ontario, with additional offices in Edmonton, Alberta and Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Broadband Communications North (BCN) was incorporated in 2002 as a not-for-profit community driven network which initially targeted 28 un-served and underserved communities with broadband issues in Manitoba. Since then BCN has been actively improving and expanding its network to serve more communities to facilitate equitable high-speed broadband. BCN now services over 50 rural, northern and remote communities in Manitoba.

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