

HIGH SPEED INTERNET NOW OPERATING IN CARLYLE

Andrew Agencies launches service.

High speed Internet access is now an option in Carlyle.

Andrew Agencies, in conjunction with RFNow Inc of Virden, have installed a network of towers and leased tower space between Carlyle, Moosomin and Virden.

By using "frequency hopping", radios mounted on these strategically located towers allow Carlyle and area businesses and individuals to have true high speed Internet access.

RFNow Inc is developing and marketing this high-speed wireless data communications network in Southeastern Saskatchewan.

"We did this out of necessity, because we have multiple office locations that need to be networked," said Blair Andrew, a partner of Andrew Agencies and president of RFNow.

"The proper solution is true high speed Internet networking that provides office efficiencies."

RFNow is already servicing a number of clients in the Virden area where the project was piloted and is ready to launch service to new and existing clients in an expanded area, including Carlyle.

This summer a tower was put up behind the Andrew Agencies office on Main Street in Carlyle, and the insurance and realty business has been accessing high speed Internet for the past month.

"It's just indescribable the amount of difference this has made. The office is more efficient, Before, I could get one file done a day. Now I can do as many files as I want in a day," said Blair Andrew.

"And we're finding we can do more things, things we hadn't looked at before."

High speed data communications allow clients broadband access to the Internet, their own networks, eventually IP telephone technology, BPNs and any other Internet standards based protocol.

Clients will pay a fixed monthly fee based on their desired level of bandwidth service. There is a one-time installation fee that varies depending on the on site equipment requirements.

RFNow can supply one, two or three megabit per second speeds over the network depending on client requirements and higher speeds are becoming available.

Unlike ADSL, which operates at 128 kbps per second in, but 64 kbps out, RFNow's wireless clients will experience their selected speed in both directions (dedicated bandwidth).

Andrew said comparing the two technologies is like comparing apples to oranges. To obtain the same bandwidth with ADSL would cost about \$450 to \$1,000 per month, whereas one, two and three megabits is \$150, \$250 and \$350 respectively.

So how fast is fast, when talking about high speed Internet access?

"Using a dial-up line it used to take anywhere from 45 to 75 seconds to draw a website, and now it takes a second to 1.5 seconds," explained Andrew.

RFNow has a five-year contract with Andrew Agencies to provide data communications services. They also have several other clients, one being the Fort La Bosse School Division at Virden.

RFNow and the division are working together to build out and operate a wireless network for selected schools and the school division office.

RFNow is also in negotiations with a number of economic development associations.

Andrew said anyone who has an Internet based application in their business or home would benefit from accessing this service.

"We really look at this as enhancing Sask Tel's (ADSL) service and not competing with them.

"Our approach is to provide a service that is a potential solution to our clients' high speed Internet requirements here, and something that benefits the community. This is a win-win situation for everyone," said Andrew.

"We understand small towns and the battles they face to stay competitive. This is a great way to make rural communities more competitive with the city environment."