



# Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **SRMT EXPANDS SUCCESSFUL ON-TERRITORY BROADBAND PROJECT TO AN OFF-TERRITORY ENTERPRISE**

*Mohawk Networks, LLC Development Begins Mid-2015*

**AKWESASNE, NY**—The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe has positioned their Broadband Unit to connect residential and commercial customers in Northern New York to reliable, cost-effective broadband service through an expansion of their current infrastructure. The Unit will transition to Mohawk Networks, an LLC-owned and managed by the Tribe's *Tewathahonni* Corporation. Akwesasne TV, LLC was formed and will be managed by Mohawk Networks. Mohawk Networks, LLC's vision is to bring connectivity to the North Country and "stimulate economic development and job creation, while exceeding Federal Communications Commission standards." The expansion follows the Tribe's successful completion of a \$15 million broadband project in early 2014 that laid sixty-eight miles of fiber and connected hundreds of Akwesasne residents to high speed internet.

Mohawk Networks, LLC brings \$15 million in assets and is an investment in the future. Executive sponsor to Broadband for Tribal Council, Sub-Chief Shelley Jacobs, stated, "Today, we have an infrastructure so strong that we see regional partnerships developing and economic growth on the horizon. We believe that collaboration between our regional partners will create a stronger North Country. Our goal to expand our broadband services to our surrounding neighbors will enhance educational opportunities, economic development opportunities and be a game changing transition for the region."

Mohawk Networks mission is to provide reliable, affordable high-speed broadband internet access to residents of the North Country through existing fiber optics and new wireless infrastructure throughout the entire Northern New York region. "We are striving to give everyone, regardless of their geographical area, access to the internet," commented the Broadband General Manager, Jeff Beekhoo. "We will utilize fiber optics and wireless, Fi-Wi, to provide connectivity to high speed internet to an un-served and under-served demographic in Northern New York. We want to help the estimated 1.5 million North Country residents that have insufficient internet service." The five-year broadband build out plan includes application for state and federal grant programs to further expand the network within New York State.

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The Development Authority of the North Country (DANC) will be used to provide middle-mile connectivity to six (6) strategically placed towers throughout the North Country to increase fiber bandwidth and redundant systems, FI-WI (Fiber to Wi-Fi), which will provide significant bandwidth capabilities to the currently underserved end-user. DANC is a New York state Public Authority that provides middle-mile connectivity utilizing existing fiber optic connectivity throughout the North Country. The first phase will bring connectivity and proof of concept to Brasher, Bombay and Lewis County to prove the technology's ability to successfully work outside of the immediate service area.

The expansion of the Tribe's broadband is an economic development opportunity that is expected to bring jobs and local growth and investment opportunities to the North Country. "Expansion catalyzes economic growth and secondary investment," expressed the Tribe's Economic Development Director, Christopher Thompson. "The acceleration of business development will lead to innovation, e-commerce and connect us to the global economy."

The Tribe's gaming operations have been a significant economic driver in the North Country for over a decade. "This initiative aligns with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's core values. We take care of our people. We develop jobs. We as leaders are ultimately responsible for doing what we can to create strong communities and continuously make this region a place where our young people can return home to. Through this project, the Tribe is investing in the region's future," remarked Chief Ron LaFrance.

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The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council is the duly elected and federally recognized government of the Saint Regis Mohawk People.