

Historical Timeline of Canadian Telecommunications Achievements

- July 26, 1874** Alexander Graham Bell discloses idea for a telephone to his father in Brantford, Ontario.
- 1880** Bell Canada is incorporated.
- February 1, 1881** Bell Canada installs its first public telephone in Lancefield's Stationery Store, in Hamilton, Ontario. The telephone is not equipped with a coin collector and customers pay the storekeeper.
- June 11, 1881** Bell Canada successfully places the world's first international submarine telephone cable between Windsor, Ontario and Detroit, Michigan (US).
- 1885** Alberta's first telephone call, between Fort Edmonton and the St. Albert mission.
- August 10, 1876** Alexander Graham Bell's Double Pole Membrane Transmitter and Iron Box Receiver are used to transmit and receive the world's first one-way long distance telephone call from Brantford to Paris, Ontario.
- 1887** The first long distance call, between Edmonton and Battleford, Saskatchewan.
- December 7, 1895** The Northern Electric & Manufacturing Co., now Nortel Networks, is organized, as a spin-off of the Bell Mechanical Department.
- April 13, 1900** A common battery service is introduced in Bell Canada's territory in Ottawa, Ontario. Instead of turning a crank on the telephone to signal the operator, the customer merely picks up the receiver. The batteries are removed from the customers' premises to the central office. They are still there today, maintaining telephone service even during a power failure.
- 1903** Bell Canada becomes subject to the Railway Act of 1903 and changes to rates for telephone service must now be approved by the Board of Railway Commissioners for Canada.
- 1904** The City of Edmonton purchased the Edmonton District Telephone Company.
- 1906** The Province of Alberta commenced operation of the provincial phone system after acquiring the Alberta assets of the Bell Telephone Company.
- 1908** Automatic telephone equipment introduced.
- February 14, 1916** Montreal is connected with Vancouver by telephone for the first time. The connection is made through a circuit of 6,763 kilometres from Buffalo, Chicago, Omaha, Salt Lake City, and Portland in the United States.
- 1919** SaskTel's predecessor (the provincial department of telephones) was responsible for operating the first unattended telephone office in North America. Also, it was the first in Canada to provide dial service to rural customers.
- 1923** Saskatchewan provincial department of telephones provided lines for the first church service broadcast in Canada.

- July 19, 1924** Dial service is inaugurated in Toronto, Ontario. Bell Canada representatives call customers to advise them of the change; others meet with members of the community to teach them the proper use of the dial. Operators are also trained to use the new technology.
- July 1927** The combined receiver-transmitter long used by telephone linemen is sufficiently improved to be adapted for general use. This set ushers in the era of combination handset telephones.
- 1927** Québec-Téléphone is formed, with its customers among the very first in Canada to gain access to telephone service via individual lines only.
- October 3, 1927** Inauguration of commercial transatlantic telephone service by Prime Ministers W.L. Mackenzie King (Canada) and Stanley Baldwin (Great Britain).
- 1928** The first long distance call between Alberta and overseas.
- 1920s and 1930s** SaskTel continued to upgrade its services throughout the 1920s and 1930s, becoming one of the founding members of the national TransCanada Telephone System (TCTS), which later changed its name to Telecom Canada and is now known as Stentor.
- July 31, 1932** The Governor General of Canada, The Earl of Bessborough, inaugurates the Trans-Canada Telephone System (TCTS), providing coast-to-coast telephone service over all-Canadian lines.
- April 26, 1945** Bell Canada installs its millionth telephone, sixty-five years after its incorporation.
- June 28, 1947** Bell Canada introduces the first commercial mobile telephone service in Canada. The Toronto Globe & Mail is the first subscriber to take advantage of the service offering for speedy on-the-spot coverage of news events.
- January 19, 1953** Bell Canada provides the first permanent television link between two countries to bring United States programs from Buffalo, New York, to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in Toronto. On May 14 of the same year, viewers in Toronto (CBLT) and in Montreal (CBFT) can view the same live program simultaneously for the first time.
- July 8, 1956** Bell Canada inaugurates Direct Distance Dialing, permitting customers to dial some of their own long distance calls without operator assistance.
- 1957** SaskTel completed its portion of the first trans-Canada microwave-radio relay system. With this system, live network television programs could be transmitted coast-to-coast. This helped to create the tradition behind nation-wide broadcasts like "Hockey Night in Canada."
- June 18, 1958** Bell Canada president Thomas Eadie's dream of an all-Canadian microwave network is realized on this date. The 6,400-kilometer network of microwave links, the longest in the world, transports telephone conversations, Teletype messages and television signals.
- 1958** The Alberta Government Telephones Commission was established, ending direct government management of the provincial system.
- May 1, 1960** All Number Calling (7-digit telephone numbers) is introduced in Bell Canada territory. The first to benefit from these new numbers are subscribers in Ormstown and Franklin-Centre, Quebec.
- March 15, 1962** The Bell Telephone Company of Canada is the first telephone company in the world to offer a commercial facsimile service.

- June 15, 1964** Bell Canada inaugurates Touch-Tone™ service in Montreal and Toronto. The regular telephone becomes a potential data terminal when the rotary dial is replaced by pushbuttons.
- 1967** The first touch-tone service in western Canada introduced.
- 1969** The first "911" system in Canada introduced.
- 1960s** Direct distance dialing was introduced by SaskTel, eliminating the need for operators to handle all long distance calls. Seven thousand rural customers, who were previously without telephone service, received it for the first time. Also, push button or "touch-tone" phones became available.
- 1971** Canada has the world's first domestic digital microwave network.
- 1972** Canada has the world's first packet-switched network.
- 1972** Canada launches the world's first national geostationary satellite.
- October 6, 1974** In London, Ontario, Bell Canada deploys the first 9-1-1 emergency calling system for police, fire and ambulance services.
- 1975** The world's then largest "Centrex" system installed for the Government of Alberta.
- 1976** The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission becomes the government regulatory body for telecommunications.
- December 16, 1977** Bell Canada conducts the first Canadian technical field trial of fiber optic technology in Montreal. One of the main advantages of fiber optic transmission lies in its enormous capacity for transmitting.
- 1977** Northern Telecom's DMS-1† system field trial in Valleyfield, Québec.
- 1970s** Saskatchewan was the first province in Canada to have all toll lines buried.
- 1980** Canada's first digital switching units incorporated in parts of the network.
- 1982** Canada's first cellular telephone system introduced to serve Alberta resource industries.
- 1983** Last Annual General Meeting of Bell Canada shareholders. A.J. de Grandpré receives a message confirming the creation of BCE, the new parent company of Bell Canada.
- 1984** SaskTel completed what was then the world's longest commercial fiber-optic network, linking more than 100 communities, rural and urban, inside Saskatchewan. Multi-line party telephone facilities were upgraded to private line service. A province-wide relay service for the hearing impaired persons was also implemented. As SaskTel became an acknowledged world leader in telecommunications, SaskTel International was formed to market SaskTel's expertise to worldwide markets.
- July 1, 1985** Bell Cellular offers cellular mobile telephone service.
- 1986** Conventional competitive cellular phone service launched in Alberta.
- 1990** Canada has the world's largest contiguous cellular network.
- 1990** Edmonton Telephones Corporation (ED TEL) established as an arms-length subsidiary company of the City of Edmonton.

- 1990** TELUS Corporation established, following the reorganization of the Alberta Government Telephones Commission, becoming the parent company of AGT. The sale of TELUS shares marked the largest initial public offering in Canadian history up to this time, raising \$896 million.
- 1991** The Province of Alberta sold its remaining ownership interest in TELUS for \$870 million.
- 1992** North America's first digital cellular network launched.
- early 1990s** SaskTel was the first telephone company in Canada to complete its rural individual line service program, bringing some 70,000 rural customers the convenience of private line telephone service. SaskTel was also the first to introduce Microlink™ service, an advanced digital communications service that allows business customers to economically transmit data at high speed using existing telephone facilities.
- 1993** Canada boasts the world's largest point-to-point asynchronous transfer mode (ATM) network.
- October 4, 1993** Canadian first: 416/905 area code split.
- 1993** SaskTel began a three-year, \$29 million north Saskatchewan modernization program to replace older analog radio facilities. The program included the installation of new digital radio routes, computerized switching equipment, a new fibre optic route, and satellite technology to service the far north.
- 1994** Canada has the world's most comprehensive fibre-optic network.
- 1994** Long distance telephone competition commenced in Alberta.
- March 23, 1995** Bell Canada establishes a presence on the World Wide Web www.bell.ca
- 1995** TELUS acquired ED TEL from the City of Edmonton for \$467 million.
- 1995** Consumer Internet service is launched.
- 1995** SaskTel launched new services to assist its customers to economically access internet. SaskTel International began a three-phase \$80 million contract to provide telecommunications service to rural communities throughout the Philippines archipelago. It also played a key role in the largest construction project of the 20th century – helping install and test the communications system that runs in the Channel Tunnel linking England and France.
- 1996** Canada launches the world's most powerful geostationary mobile communications satellite.
- 1996** Canada's first Internet Yellow Pages™ service launched – alberta.com
- 1996** The TELUS "master brand" introduced, bringing products and companies under one unified identity. The ED TEL and AGT brands are retired.
- 1997** TELUS given approval by the CRTC to commence multimedia service trials in Edmonton and Calgary.
- Late 1990s** SaskTel began a world-first "Hollywood at Home" video-on-demand trial that uses fiber optic technology to deliver current hit movies to residential customers in Regina.

- 1997** PRIMUS Canada is founded, a wholly owned subsidiary of McLean, Virginia-based PRIMUS Telecommunications Group, Incorporated, with offices in Vancouver, Toronto, Oakville, London, Windsor, Montreal, and Edmundston.
- 1998** TELUS Corporation and BC TELECOM announce a proposed merger. This is the first step toward creating a leading national telecommunications company.
- February 1, 1999** Bell Canada officially launches Bell Nexxia. The new company is designed to offer Bell business customers who operate nationally, a full range of Internet Protocol (IP) services over an advanced broadband network stretching from coast-to-coast and in the United States.