



On Thin Ice  
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Sur un terrain glissant  
tthení tèn dètānhilé k'è nōdher sōṇā

## Media Release

9 Feb 2015

### **ON THIN ICE: Promoting Disability Inclusive Emergency Preparedness and Response, in Canada's Arctic**

In 2013, the Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments (GAATES) launched the On Thin Ice (OTI) Project. Funded by the Government of Canada's Social Development Partnerships Program, the project seeks to protect lives and improve the security, well-being, and inclusion of persons with disabilities (physical, cognitive and sensory) and other vulnerable populations in the Arctic, through increasing public awareness and the development of disability inclusive emergency planning.

In February and March of this year, members of the On Thin Ice project team, in cooperation with OpenBroadcaster<sup>1</sup>, will be simultaneously undertaking a community pilot project in all three territories at, Cambridge Bay NU, Inuvik NT and Tagish YT. This will see the installation and operation of LED accessible emergency signage boards, for use in priority notification in some of Canada's remote northern communities.

The purpose of the LED accessible emergency signage boards is to provide members of the communities, especially persons with disabilities, access to emergency planning and preparation information before an emergency, as well as real-time information about an emergency during the event.

The use of community LED signage boards is a recognized international best practice for providing real-time information on emergencies to community members who otherwise would not receive to the information because of lack of access to TV, radio, Internet, telephone service, power outages, etc.

OpenBroadcaster is undertaking the installation and providing the open source web based software tools to manage emergency alerts for Radio, Television, Digital Signage and Cable TV channels. The systems being installed are able to accept and immediately broadcast Pelmorex™ (NAAD) National Alert Aggregation & Dissemination feeds<sup>2</sup>, as well as localized alerts provided by territorial and local emergency managers.

1 OpenBroadcaster. <http://www.openbroadcaster.com/about-us>

2 Pelmorex™ (NAAD) National Alerts (The Weather Network) <https://alerts.pelmorex.com>

Emergency preparedness and planning information will be continually broadcast on the LED accessible emergency signage boards based on culturally and linguistically relevant information gathered during previous meetings with organizations, seniors, persons with disabilities, building code and safety officials, first responders, emergency management administrators, First Nations and Inuit leaders.

During an emergency, relevant and timely information about the situation will be broadcast unattended, based on incoming information from Pelmorex and/or local emergency managers.

The On Thin Ice Project team is excited to be working with Tagish, YT based OpenBroadcaster Inc., and would like to give a special thanks our to our corporate partners; Air North, Coast Hotels and SSI Micro. Without their support, this Pilot project would not be possible.



The Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments (GAATES) is an International not-for-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of accessibility of the built, social and virtual environments, so that people with disabilities and older persons are able to fully participate and contribute to society, without impediment.

For more information, on the On Thin Ice project or the Pilot LED accessible emergency alerting signage boards project, contact:

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