

EAST SIDE

TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVE

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MINISTER'S MESSAGE



As the Minister responsible for the East Side Road Authority (ESRA), I am very pleased to let you know that work on the all-season

road network on the east side of Lake Winnipeg is moving forward. I have always supported the development of an all-season road network on the east side – and now it's happening. This project will improve accessibility and help to reduce the cost of goods and services for people living on the east side.

The all-season road network is the largest construction project of its kind in the history of Manitoba. Once completed, it will provide year-round access to the 13 isolated and remote First Nation communities in the region. As construction proceeds, residents will see marked improvements as winter roads are converted into all-season roads. A good example of such improvements will be the installation of new Acrow panel bridges at Big Stone and Red Sucker Rivers, which will help to extend the length of the winter road seasons. This work is scheduled to begin next winter.

Recognizing the economic challenges that east side residents face, the Government of Manitoba is committed to ensuring that local east side residents participate in, and benefit from, the project. As a result, ESRA has committed to invest approximately 35 per cent, or \$315 million, of the overall road

construction budget in jobs, training and economic development opportunities for local residents, over the next 15 years.

To achieve this ambitious objective, ESRA has entered into multi-million dollar community benefits agreements (CBAs) with east side communities. These agreements ensure that east side communities have employment, training and economic development opportunities before, during and after construction. To date, ESRA has entered into CBAs, worth nearly \$50 million, with all 13 east side First Nations. In addition to CBAs, ESRA is also including local hiring and procurement requirements in construction contracts.

Currently, pre-construction work is ongoing in Hollow Water, Bloodvein, Berens River, Wasagamack and Red Sucker Lake First Nations. Training has also occurred for over 100 people in these communities. Additional training will take place in east side communities as the project proceeds.

If you would like to know more about ESRA, or how you can be a part of the all-season road project, please contact ESRA toll free 1-866-356-6355 or go to www.eastsideroadauthority.mb.ca.

Thank you, Miigwech, Ekosani,



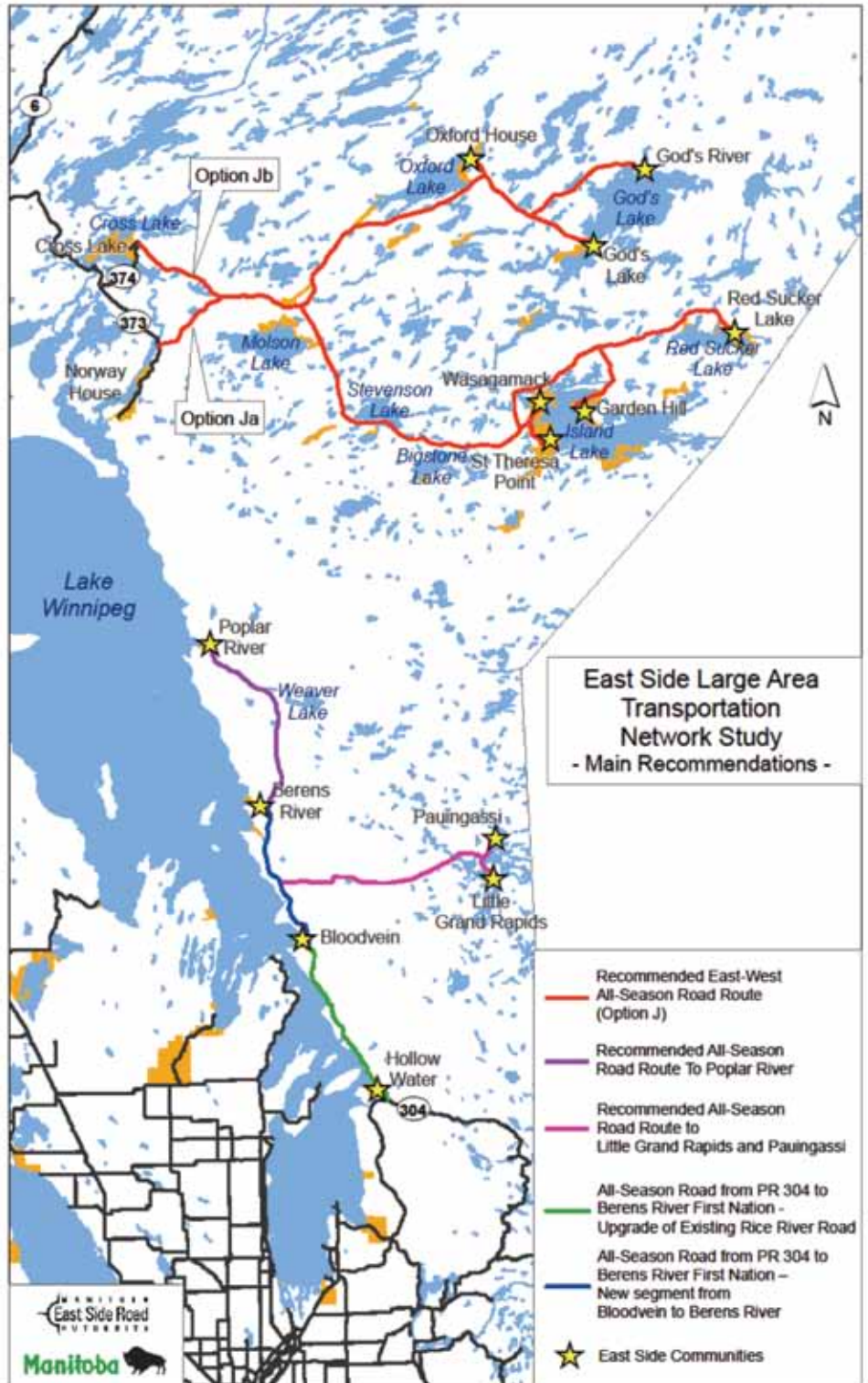
ERIC ROBINSON
Minister responsible for the
East Side Road Authority

LARGE AREA TRANSPORTATION NETWORK STUDY OUTLINES ALL-SEASON ROAD NETWORK ON EAST SIDE

Recently, the *Final Report of the Large Area Transportation Network (LATN) Study*, which examined potential transportation improvements on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, was completed and submitted to the East Side Road Authority (ESRA) for consideration.

The technical analysis and feedback received from the communities have contributed significantly to the final report, including the following **three** recommendations:

1. A 648 km east-west route that involves a “Y” junction north of Molson Lake with branches going north-east to the Northern Cree Communities (Bunibonibee Cree Nation, Manto Sipi Cree Nation, and God’s Lake First Nation), and south-east to the Island Lake communities (Red Sucker Lake, Garden Hill, Wasagamack and St. Theresa Point First Nations). For the western end of the route, ESRA is recommending that the link to Norway House Cree Nation be built initially, and that an all-season road to Cross Lake First Nation be considered for future construction.
2. An approximate 131 km all-season road route linking Little Grand Rapids and Pauingassi First Nations to a midway point between Bloodvein and Berens River along the all-season road from PR 304 to Berens River First Nation, including a direct connection and access to the airport near Little Grand Rapids; and
3. Extending the proposed all-season road from PR 304 to Berens River First Nation for approximately 93 kms to Poplar River First Nation.



The study noted that 80 per cent of the proposed east-west route is located on or near the existing winter road. As a result, the study indicates that an east-west route is preferable to a north-south route for several reasons including:

- **Shorter distance:** An east-west route is approximately 202 to 248 km shorter in length than a comparable north-south route, resulting in lower construction costs, shorter travel distances and travel times for residents, and a more timely completion date.
- **Reduced impact to the natural environment:** A north-south route would cross environmentally sensitive terrain, including undisturbed boreal forest, endangered woodland caribou habitat and the existing Poplar River Provincial Park and the

proposed UNESCO World Heritage Site. In comparison, approximately 80 per cent of the east-west route is located on or near existing winter road, which reduces the need to establish new right-of-ways in pristine sections of the boreal forest, and break-up undisturbed habitat.

- **Construction challenges:** A north-south route would pose significant construction challenges because it would cross a large area of undisturbed land that includes extensive rocky outcrops, swamps and muskeg. In comparison, an east-west route would follow a larger section of the existing winter roads which would provide the following benefits:
 - There is a better knowledge and understanding of the land and soils along the route.

- Staging all-season road construction will be easier since the existing winter road will be in place to transport workers, equipment and materials.
- There is a better knowledge of available road building materials (ex: gravel) along the winter road route than along a route that crosses new territory.



Background

In April 2009, as part of the East Side Transportation Initiative, SNC Lavalin was hired to do a Large Area Transportation Network Study (LATNS), examining potential routes for a proposed all-season road network on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. As part of the study, 11 different routes were examined.

These 11 routes were presented as options to local residents through two rounds of public meetings in each community. Meetings were also held with Chief and councils. **The public involvement process revealed that there was widespread support from the communities for an east-west, over a north-south, all-season road route.**

Network options were also evaluated using a multidisciplinary evaluation, which looked at engineering, construction, social, economic and environmental factors. The route options were refined and shortlisted, based on the technical and general feedback from the communities. The Final Report is the end-result of the two-year study and outlines its recommendations.

The report also notes that the proposed network will:

- lower the freight costs (goods and essential supplies) by 50 per cent and medical cost transport by 40 per cent
- reduce greenhouse gases (GHGs) by 30 per cent, or an estimated 16,700 tonnes per year

- save 6.1 million litres of fuel per year, as a result of shifting travel from air and winter roads, to an all-season road system
- create 22,000 person-years of direct employment, and approximately 15,000 person-years of indirect employment
- be approximately 872 km in length and cost approximately \$2.7 billion

On November 10, 2010 – based on preliminary results and ongoing discussions with local communities – ESRA announced its recommendation for an east-west, all-season road linking the Northern Cree and Island Lake communities to PR 373, with a future connection to PR 374. This recommendation was confirmed in the LATN Study's final report.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE ON PR 304 TO BERENS RIVER ALL-SEASON ROAD

Construction is moving forward on the 156-kilometre (km) all-season road from PR 304 to Berens River First Nation, which will improve access for Hollow Water, Bloodvein, and Berens River First Nations, and the neighbouring communities of Aghaming, Loon Straits, Manigotagan, Princess Harbour and Seymourville.

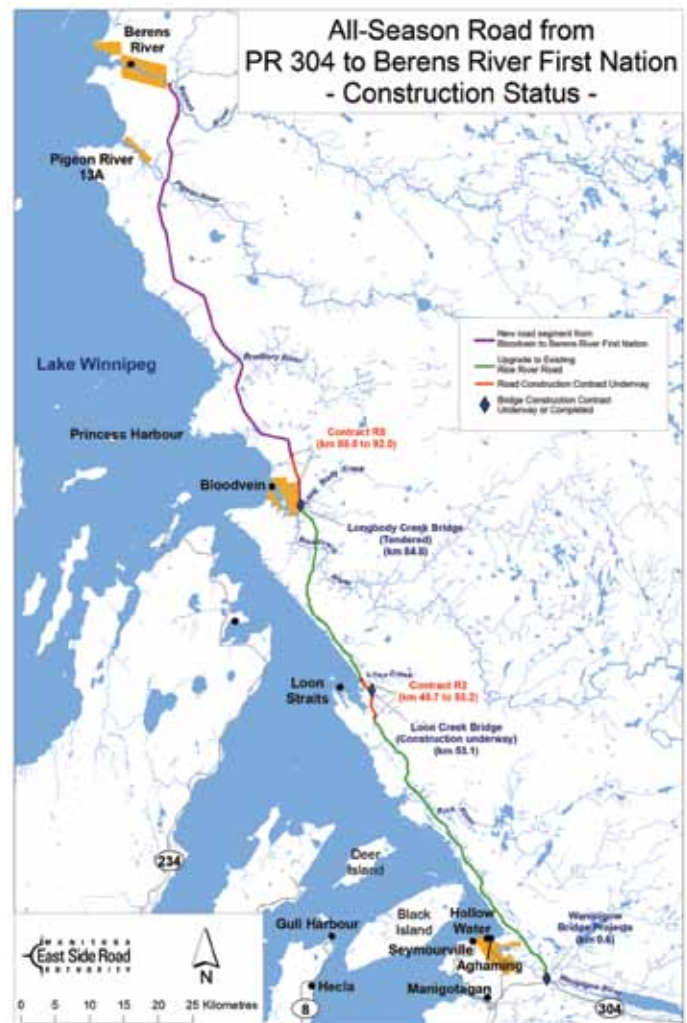
Work currently underway includes:

- **Completion of a temporary bridge over the Wanipigow River** – The temporary bridge, which is located at kilometre-one of the east side road network, will be used as a detour while construction is underway on a new permanent bridge. Once the new bridge is completed, the temporary bridge will be taken down and rebuilt at other locations along the east side road network. The project, estimated at \$1.9 million, was undertaken by Minty's Moving Ltd.
- **Construction of the Wanipigow River Bridge** – Work recently began to build a new bridge over the Wanipigow River. The project, estimated at \$4.8 million, was awarded to Surespan Construction Ltd.
- **Construction of the Loon Creek Bridge** – Preparations are underway to build a new bridge over Loon Creek. The project, estimated at \$4.5 million, was awarded to Surespan Construction Ltd.
- **Construction of the Longbody Creek Bridge** – Work was recently tendered for the construction of the Longbody Creek Bridge.
- **All-Season road construction** – Baudry Construction has begun construction of the six-kilometre (km) section of the all-season road from the Loon Straits access north (km 48 to 55) on the Rice River Road. The work is estimated at \$5.6 million. In addition, later this year ESRA is planning to issue road construction tenders for additional sections of the all-season road.

Island Lake Bridge Projects

- **Purchase and delivery of Acrow panel bridges** – ESRA has purchased three Acrow panel bridges. Two were shipped this winter for installation at Big Stone and Red Sucker Rivers next winter. The third will be shipped next winter for installation at Pelican Rapids. These bridges will help extend the length of the winter road season.

On Thursday, February 24, 2011, Eric Robinson, Minister responsible for ESRA (centre), Larry Barker, Chief of Hollow Water First Nation (right) and Ernie Gilroy, CEO of ESRA (left), opened the new Wanipigow River Temporary Bridge at an official ribbon-cutting ceremony. Approximately 45 per cent of the workers on the project were from Hollow Water or the surrounding area.





EAST SIDE PROJECT TO GENERATE LONG-LASTING BENEFITS FOR EAST SIDE COMMUNITIES

The East Side Road Authority (ESRA) has committed to invest approximately 35 per cent, or \$315 million, of the overall road-construction budget in jobs, training and economic development opportunities for local east-side residents over the next 15 years.

ESRA's business plan calls for an investment of approximately \$1.125 billion over the next fifteen years to build the all-season road. From this amount, ESRA plans to invest \$315 million in local communities through Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) and local hiring and procurement requirements.

To ensure that local communities participate in, and benefit from, the all-season road project, ESRA is entering into CBAs with 13 east-side First Nations. These agreements are designed to generate jobs, training and economic opportunities for local residents in pre-construction activities such as gravel crushing, right-of-way clearing and road improvement work. To date, ESRA has entered into CBAs, worth \$49.25 million, with all 13 east side First Nations.

Following is a list of communities that have started CBA work:

- **Hollow Water First Nation** – doing right-of-way clearing and gravel crushing

- **Bloodvein First Nation** – doing right-of-way clearing and gravel crushing, producing blast rock and building a three-kilometre access road
- **Berens River First Nation** – doing right-of-way clearing and gravel crushing
- **Wasagamack First Nation** – demolished and removed two bridge structures at Feather Rapids and Big Stone Lake, which will be replaced with two new Acrow panel bridges starting in the winter of 2011/12
- **Red Sucker Lake First Nation** – prepared a site for an Acrow panel bridge to cross the Red Sucker River

In addition to CBAs, ESRA is including local hiring, procurement and training requirements in construction tenders. The local hiring requirement is 30 per cent for road construction tenders and 20 per cent for bridge construction tenders. Residents living in communities within the vicinity of the construction are given first priority for these job opportunities.

To apply for jobs and training opportunities, please see the Employment and Training section in this newsletter or visit the ESRA website at www.eastsideroadauthority.mb.ca.



On Wednesday, March 9, 2011, ESRA hosted a construction business networking session to develop relationships between east side communities and the construction industry, in preparation for working together on the all-season road project. Approximately 100 people attended the event, including representatives from 13 First Nation communities and 25 construction companies.

AVAILABLE LOCAL EQUIPMENT BEING SOUGHT

For use in training and construction, ESRA is developing an inventory of heavy equipment available in east side communities that could be used by ESRA or contractors. The equipment must be in good working condition.

Any community members with equipment should register with ESRA by visiting the ESRA website at www.eastsideroadauthority.mb.ca or contacting:

The East Side Road Authority
200-155 Carlton Street, Winnipeg, MB R3C 3H8
Phone: 1-204-945-4900 • Toll Free: 1-866-356-6355
Fax: 1-204-948-2462

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

As construction proceeds, ESRA is encouraging local east-side residents to register for employment and training opportunities on the project.

As part of ESRA's commitment to ensure local residents participate in, and benefit from, the project, ESRA is including local hiring requirements in construction tenders. The local hiring requirement is 30 per cent for road construction tenders and 20 per cent for bridge construction tenders. Residents living in communities within the vicinity of the construction are given first priority for these job opportunities. To date, approximately 500 people have registered with ESRA.

To apply, please visit the ESRA website at www.eastsideroadauthority.mb.ca or contact:

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200-155 Carlton Street
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On Friday, March 25, 2011, ESRA staff visited Poplar River First Nation to register approximately 80 local people for jobs and training opportunities. Registration sessions were also held in Hollow Water, Bloodvein, Berens River and Red Sucker Lake First Nations. More sessions are being planned for other east side communities.

TRAINING UPDATE

To date, 110 people have been provided training opportunities in the communities of Berens River, Bloodvein, Hollow Water, Poplar River, Red Sucker Lake and Wasagamack First Nations. Training has consisted of the following:



Berens River First Nation

- Introduction to Construction (September 2009) – 15 graduates
- Skilled Labourer Training (November 2009) – five graduates
- Introduction to Construction (December 2009) – 12 graduates
- First Aid/Chainsaw Safety Training – 22 graduates

Bloodvein First Nation

- Skilled Labourer Training (June 2010) – two graduates
- Introduction to Construction (September 2010) – 12 graduates

Hollow Water First Nation

- Introduction to Construction (November 2010) – 12 graduates

Poplar River First Nation

- Introduction to Construction (May/June 2011) – 10 graduates

Wasagamack First Nation

- Introduction to Construction (December 2010) – 11 graduates

Red Sucker Lake First Nation

- Introduction to Construction (March 2011) – nine graduates

As the project proceeds, ESRA is committed to working with east side communities to offer other training programs, including heavy equipment operator training, in these and other east side communities.

STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL LICENSING FOR THE PR 304 TO BERENS RIVER ALL-SEASON ROAD

On August 16, 2010, ESRA received a licence under *The Environment Act* (Environment Act Licence No. 2929) from Manitoba Conservation, for the PR 304 to Berens River all-season road. The licence permits road construction work to proceed. For more information on the provincial licence, go to: www.gov.mb.ca/conservation/eal/registries/5388pr304_berens/index.html.

At the same time, the federal Environmental Impact Assessment process, under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act* (CEAA), is ongoing as the federal government works to complete a comprehensive study report. Approvals for the project, from the CEAA and the associated *Fisheries Act and Navigable Waters Protection Act*, are anticipated in the summer of 2011. For more information, go to ceaa.gc.ca/050/details-eng.cfm?evaluation=52056#documents.

ESRA is committed to taking all federal and provincial environmental licensing conditions fully into account as it implements the project.



WILDLIFE MONITORING UNDERWAY

ESRA has begun wildlife monitoring of woodland caribou and moose populations, to help lessen or avoid potential impacts on wildlife from the construction of an all-season road network. The three-year, \$2.5 million Wildlife Monitoring Plan is part of the environmental licensing process for the all-season road project.

Currently, the wildlife monitoring consists of the following two studies:

The Caribou Study

- 60 caribou will be studied in these areas:
 - 40 caribou – in the region between Bloodvein and Poplar River First Nations, and between Lake Winnipeg and the Manitoba-Ontario border
 - 20 caribou – between Bunibonabee and St. Theresa Point First Nations and between Norway House and Red Sucker Lake First Nations

The Moose Study

- 20 moose will be studied in these areas:
 - 10 adult female moose – in the region between Berens River and Bloodvein First Nations
 - 10 adult female moose – in the region between Hollow Water and Bloodvein First Nations

As the monitoring program goes on, local trappers and residents from east-side communities will be encouraged to gather specific wildlife information and field data.

All data collected will be used to adapt road construction plans, where possible, to lessen or avoid potential impacts on wildlife.

As part of the collaring process, no immobilizing drugs will be used, so that collared animals remain available for harvesting by Aboriginal people. Please contact ESRA toll free at 1-866-356-6355 if you harvest a collared moose or caribou, to make arrangements for ESRA to retrieve and reuse the collar.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

ESRA has undertaken a comprehensive public engagement process to ensure local residents, community leaders, non-government organizations and the general public have the opportunity to provide their input into the all-season road project.



Two rounds of community meetings were held over a two-year period to discuss both components of the East Side Transportation Initiative:

- The PR 304 to Berens River All Season Road Project
- The East Side Large Area Transportation Network (LATN) Study

Local residents were encouraged to share their views about the options and the overall project. For the PR 304 to Berens River All-Season Road Project, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) was undertaken while Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Studies were conducted for all east side First Nation communities. Input from local residents at community meetings and through TEK studies has helped shape both the EIA and the LATN Study.

WINTER ROAD PUBLIC SAFETY AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

To coincide with the winter road season earlier this year, ESRA, along with Manitoba Search and Rescue (MSAR) and Native Communications Incorporated (NCI), launched a public awareness campaign to promote winter road safety on the east side of Lake Winnipeg.

“Winter roads are a lifeline for the residents of remote and isolated communities on the east side of Lake Winnipeg,” said Eric Robinson, Minister responsible for the ESRA. “However, even at the best of times, travelling on winter roads can be dangerous. This campaign is designed to remind local residents it’s important to check road conditions and take all necessary precautions before every winter road trip.”

The campaign provided important safety information for winter road travel as well as resources for winter road conditions and weather information. The campaign involved posters that were distributed in east side communities through Aboriginal organizations and Band councils, as well as public service announcements on NCI.

SLOW DOWN WHEN PASSING WORKERS AND EQUIPMENT

The East Side Road Authority (ESRA) is advising all drivers that construction has begun to replace seasonal winter roads with all-season roads on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. Construction work will be underway at various locations between PR 304 and Berens River First Nation and pre-construction work will be occurring near many east side communities. As work proceeds on this multi-year project, construction workers and equipment will be present on or near winter roads at any, and, all times.

All drivers are advised to slow down and use caution when approaching construction workers and equipment.



On June 6, 2011, Ernie Gilroy, CEO of the ESRA (centre), Jason Robinson, ESRA Manager of Safety, (third from the right) and Roland Hamilton, Chief of Bloodvein First Nation (first on the right), toured construction sites near the community and met with workers to promote workplace safety.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The East Side Road Authority

200 - 155 Carlton Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 3H8

Phone: 204-945-4900 in Winnipeg

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E-mail: eastside@gov.mb.ca • www.eastsideroadauthority.mb.ca

