

Hampered Communications

“Our internet isn’t much use. It takes so long to down-load attachments, and if I want to send information, I have to do it in bits and pieces.”

This is the common complaint for farm and ranch users of the internet across Canada. In spite of government promises that everyone would have access to this wonderful tool of communication, it hasn’t happened. It looks like most rural areas will remain on “dial up” for the foreseeable future.

Once the urban areas and smaller communities were served, service providers ran out of steam. Extra funding hasn’t been made available because Industry Canada doesn’t consider rural Canada to be a priority. For shame!

The Alberta Rural Development Network, through its “Return to Rural” initiative, proves what a difference it makes for people in an isolated area to be fully connected. Young people and mid-career families are coming back to the farms in the Hannah-Oyen area of south-central Alberta because they have been given the means to keep up with the market reports, promote what they produce, and know what’s happening on the world stage.

It is not good enough! If we are to have future generations of farmers and ranchers who live in what is so casually referred to as “the hinterland”, they need to be given the privilege and opportunity to freely use the communication tools that are available to their urban cousins.

Why should a country preacher raise this issue? Because ignoring a specific group of people like seems to me to be a spiritual concern. These are people who have worth alongside other people. This treatment also raises economic, political and social red flags. Surely our parliamentarians are capable to choosing a higher road.

One of Solomon’s Proverbs reads: “When justice is done, good people are happy.”

(by Joyce Sasse)