

## Chair's Report

### For the year 2016

Having been Chair of the NCF Board off and on for the last 16 years, and having been Executive Director myself in 1997-2000, I can say with certainty that the organization has changed a lot. But at its core, it remains committed to the same value: ensuring everyone in the region has access to the internet.

When we started, that meant adding extra phone lines for all our dial-up members, now it means ensuring we offer affordable rates on high-speed DSL and that we have enough capacity to support members' growing usage. Consistently, we have addressed the barrier of "knowhow" through our members helping members approach.

As always, it has been an honour to work with my fellow Board members, staff, volunteers and members to move forward with NCF's work.

#### **Here are some of the highlights from the past year:**

~although we raised our prices for only the second time in 12 years to stay sustainable we continue to offer great value to our members;

~in keeping with our philosophy of helping as many people in the region as we can to access the internet, we increased Help-Desk support staff and volunteers, adding two new desks and many more people;

~we hired a second SysAdmin to keep on top of the range of technical work needed to stay current;

~we deepened our community outreach, including growing into our role as a local social enterprise, and working on a national roundtable of tech organizations (including Facebook Canada, Twitter Canada, Microsoft Canada and more) to combat cyberviolence against young women;

~we received a grant to offer hands-on workshops to many of NCF's members who are 55-years and older;

~we launched our Community Access Fund, formalizing something NCF has been doing since the beginning;

~we presented to the CRTC review of internet services, highlighting NCF's role in a much larger system, and

~we welcomed more NCF members and DSL subscribers to the fold, ensuring we are ever-more sustainable.

Finally, thanks to a CRTC-mandated drop to our capacity costs, we ended the year with a significant surplus, enabling us to continue expanding our services while keeping enough money in savings to help NCF weather future changes to the business.

In all this work, the Board's role is to represent members' perspectives, chart a path for long-term success balanced with the day-to-day operational realities, act as good employers, keep abreast of trends in the industry, and ensure administrative oversight.

I would like to thank my fellow Board members for their work in this regard. Each and every one is professional, responsive, challenging yet open-minded: it's been a joy to work with them.

I would like to offer special thanks to Phil Linttell and Robert McRae who will not returning to Board next year. NCF has benefitted from your contributions over the past few years.

**Our priorities for the coming year are to do more of the same:**

~update our strategic plan for where NCF is going next year and for the next 25 years

~grow our services

~grow our membership

~continue to chart a path that shows that NCF continues to be relevant in our region. In addition to providing a viable alternative to the big commercial ISPs, NCF will be an organization that while providing affordable access, is financially sustainable and continues its role in breaking down barriers for universal access to communications technology.

Finally, let me say how excited I am for NCF's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. This September we will be hosting a party at City Hall to celebrate all the people who have contributed to National Capital FreeNet's remarkable journey over the years. I hope you'll join us.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any ideas to help make NCF even stronger. My email is [chair@ncf.ca](mailto:chair@ncf.ca).

Thank you,

Chris Cope,

Chair, NCF Board of Directors