

First Nations VOICE

25 years of serving the community – The North West Company celebrates milestone anniversary

For over 300 years The North West Company (NWC) has served as the local general store throughout Northern Canada.

It's the place where you get your eggs, flour, bread and pretty much everything else in between – it's also just as much a fixture in the community as the rivers and lakes that dot the northern landscape.

The company's historical roots extend back to the fur trading voyage of the Nonsuch in 1668, and in fact, one of the first trading posts established in Northern Canada is still operating today as a Northern store at Waskaganish in James Bay.

But it wasn't until 25 years ago that the company with a rich historical legacy took its first step towards independence when a group of enter-

prising managers, employees and investors purchased the Northern Stores Division from Hudson Bay Company and a new company was born.

"As a tribute to the company's rich legacy The North West Company was adopted as the formal name for the new venture," says Michael McMullen, Executive Vice President, Northern Canada Retail. "We wanted the name to reflect the enterprising spirit of the voyageurs who helped found the fur trade laying the foundation for the stores we operate today."

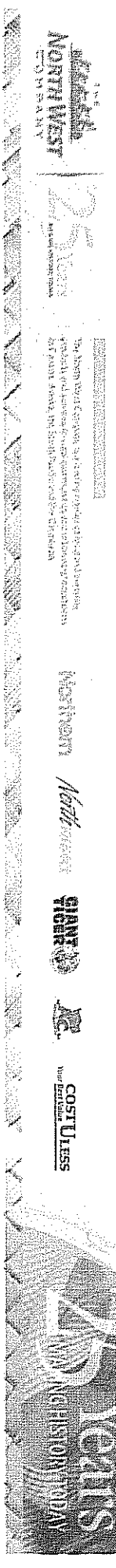
Today, Northern and NorthMart serve over 130 communities and are the largest local employer in Canada's North and the largest private sector employer of First Nations people in Canada.

According to McMullen, the extent of NWC's

commitment to the community goes well beyond being both a provider of goods and local employer. Last year, NWC devoted approximately 1.3 million of net earnings to support sports and recreation, arts and culture, healthy living, education and environmental sustainability.

Among the worthy causes supported by NWC are a number of breakfast and snack programs at local elementary schools such as the Health Track Wellness Tour, the Father Porte Memorial Dene School breakfast program and the OneX-One First Nations School Breakfast Program.

As the company looks ahead into 2012, a number of new community support initiatives are being planned as part of their 25th anniversary including one centred on healthy living.



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