



Retail Council of Canada
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www.retailcouncil.org

The North West Company's Edward Kennedy Awarded with Retail Industry's Highest Honour "Distinguished Retailer of the Year"

For Immediate Release

TORONTO, May 10, 2006 – Retail Council of Canada (RCC) is pleased to present Edward Kennedy, President and CEO of The North West Company, with the coveted "2006 Distinguished Canadian Retailer of the Year" award to recognize his role as a leader in the retail industry, in addition to his generous humanitarian and charitable commitments to the community at large.

"Edward Kennedy is an exceptional leader in both the retail industry and in communities across Canada," says Diane J. Brisebois, President and CEO, Retail Council of Canada. "Mr. Kennedy has led The North West Company to new heights, acting as a role model to the more than 5,900 employees and shepherding the company to one of the most consistent growth records in Canadian retail while becoming the largest single private sector employer of Aboriginal people. Edward's ongoing commitment to the community and to local economic development initiatives has established The North West Company and its thousands of associates as steadfast community builders and supporters."

"This recognition is gratefully accepted by me on behalf of our people, our customers and all of our stakeholders," says Edward Kennedy. "North West is a partnership that works. We have an enterprising spirit that reaches out to new ideas and the community at large. And, like many other mid-size Canadian retailers, we see nothing but potential in today's marketplace. Thank you to Retail Council of Canada for creating this award over 20 years ago and since that time for showcasing the unique strengths of Canadian retailers like North West."

Since joining The North West Company in 1989, Mr. Kennedy ushered in an era of renewing the company's strong link to its core northern store base and colourful past while pursuing new markets, products and services. Under Mr. Kennedy's leadership, the company re-established its identity as an independent retailer in Canada, became the dominant retailer in rural Alaska and launched the expansion of Giant Tiger discount stores into Western Canada.

Today, the company has sales of over \$900 million and employs more than 5,900 people. As a leading retailer of food and everyday products to rural communities and urban neighbourhoods across northern and western Canada and Alaska, Winnipeg-based North West operates 193 retail outlets under the banners of *Northern*, *NorthMart*, *Quickstop*, *Giant Tiger* and *AC Value Center*.

Mr. Kennedy has been recognized with numerous honours including "Top 40 under 40" in 1999, along with "The Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba Award for the Outstanding Contribution to the Community by a Manitoba Business" in 2001. Mr. Kennedy has been active in Aboriginal economic development and education initiatives including the creation of an education award program through the Business Council of Manitoba that has granted 700 awards worth \$1.8 million to Aboriginal post-secondary students. In 2003, he received the "Ivan Ahenakew Award" from the Interprovincial Association on Native Employment. The North West Company

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believes in improving the communities in which it operates. For example, in 2006, the company donated approximately 300 pairs of running shoes to the students of the inner-city Mulvey School in Winnipeg. In addition, the company has been a major supporter of the Canadian Diabetes Association through its annual international marathon walk/run teams comprised of employees and community members. This initiative has contributed more than \$600,000 in the past five years.

This award will be presented to Mr. Kennedy on behalf of the retail industry at a gala dinner on Monday, June 5, 2006. The dinner, part of STORE 2006 – Canada’s Retail Conference, will take place at the Toronto Congress Centre at 6:30 p.m.

The “Distinguished Canadian Retailer of the Year” award recognizes a retail leader who has led his/her company to outstanding business success and innovation, in addition to consistently demonstrating community commitment and support. Mr. Kennedy joins a notable list of past winners including Annette Verschuren, Division President, Canada, The Home Depot® (2005); Wayne Sales, President and Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Tire Corporation, Limited (2004); and Wynne Powell, President and Chief Executive Officer, London Drugs Limited (2003).

For more information about STORE 2006, Canada’s Retail Conference, log onto www.STOREconference.org.

Retail Council of Canada (www.retailcouncil.org) is the Voice of Retail. It is a not-for-profit association representing more than 40,000 stores of all retail formats, including independent merchants, regional and national mass and specialty chains, and online merchants.

Media are welcome. For more information or to RSVP, contact: Stephanie Petroff, Manager, National Public Affairs, (416) 922-0553, ext. 228; e-mail spetroff@retailcouncil.org.

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