



*The North West Company is a leading retailer of food and everyday products and services to rural communities and urban neighbourhoods in Canada, Alaska, the South Pacific and the Caribbean.*

## **New North West Company Community Initiatives To Promote Healthy Food Options and Indigenous Languages**

**Winnipeg MB, June 15, 2017** -- As part of its ongoing commitment to community support, The North West Company (“North West”) today announced new initiatives to expand the range of healthy food choices in its stores and to promote the use and learning of more than 30 indigenous languages and dialects.

“These two initiatives respond to customer needs and community priorities, which are closely intertwined at North West, and go to the heart of our purpose of helping people live better.” said Edward Kennedy, President and CEO of North West. “We are also excited to work with stakeholders who will help us implement and adjust our plans to make them as effective as possible.”

### **Support for Indigenous Languages**

In what is believed to be the first such program offered by a major Canadian retailer, North West will provide indigenous translations on shelf labels and signs across more than 80 food categories.

“This is an ambitious translation project, with more than 150 communities participating and 32 different languages or dialects, and counting,” said Kennedy. “It recognizes the importance of language to sustaining culture around the world and especially within the indigenous communities that we serve across Canada, Alaska and other regions.”

The program is aimed at communicating in the language actively used by community member and educating others. Shelf labels will include QR codes that can be scanned with a mobile device, providing an audio translation that allows shoppers to hear the proper pronunciation.

In addition to using professional translators, North West is collaborating with several schools on the audio translations.

“We were delighted to partner with North West on this initiative and highly recommend that other schools support the program,” says Garrison Settee, vice-principal of Mikisew Middle School in Pimicikamak, Manitoba. “This was a great way for our elders and youth to work together on something that will benefit the entire community.”



(Milk – OjiCree)

### **More Healthy Food Options**

As consumers look for healthier food options North West has identified a gap in the number of everyday foods that are lower in sugar, fat and salt content while still appealing to prevalent taste profiles.

“We have seen a sales lift in healthy foods fully covered by Nutrition North,” said Kennedy. “But there are hundreds of other food products that are not eligible and that can be formulated into healthier versions. Our buyers have worked hard to source 300 to 800 of these items, depending on store size and we’ve created several unique products.”

A great example is our new Best Value drink crystals with reduced sugar content. Today we sell a half a million units of the regular sugar version in our Giant Tiger, Northern and North Mart stores in Canada. That equal to over 30 million servings. If we can convert 20% of our healthier option we’ll have helped cut 127,000 kilograms of sugar from the diets of some of our youngest consumers.

Both the healthy eating and indigenous language programs will launch in the fall of 2017.

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### **About The North West Company**

The North West Company Inc., through its subsidiaries, is a leading retailer of food and everyday products and services to rural communities and urban neighbourhoods in Canada, Alaska, the South Pacific and the Caribbean. North West employs 8,500 associates, the majority within the communities that it serves. It operates 241 stores under the trading names Northern, NorthMart, Giant Tiger, Alaska Commercial Company, Cost-U-Less and RiteWay Food Markets and has annualized sales of approximately CDN \$2.0 billion.

North West’s Northern and NorthMart stores are the largest private employers of Indigenous people in Canada and Alaska.

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