



*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.*

## **NEWS RELEASE - For Immediate Release:**

### **The North West Company and First Nations pound the pavement in Rome, Italy to beat diabetes in Canada's north**

**Winnipeg, March 15, 2011 (TSX:NWF)** - Staff from Canada's oldest retailer, The North West Company (NWC), will run side by side with First Nations leaders in Rome, Italy next week as they raise money to tackle diabetes in Canada's Aboriginal communities. The 77 North West employees from places as far north as Iqaluit, Nunavut have been training for months and expect to raise over \$500,000 in the international marathon.

Grand Chief David Harper of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), representing 30 First Nations in northern Manitoba and Edward Kennedy, President and CEO of NWC will start the 26.2 miles Maratona di Roma (Rome marathon) together at the Roman Colosseum on Sunday March 20<sup>th</sup>.

"This is the 10<sup>th</sup> year that our employees from coast to coast have participated in a Team Diabetes marathon. In fact we have some employees who have done this race for three years. Over that time we raised over \$2 million for the Canadian Diabetes Association, with the help of our communities we serve" said Kennedy.

"In the past most of these funds have gone into research. While research is an important activity, this year we are pleased to direct 100% of the net proceeds we raise from the Rome marathon into diabetes education and healthy living programs within the 140 communities where we have participating stores." Kennedy said.

"We are grateful for our unique partnership with The North West Company. This is a shining example of for-profit companies investing with us to support people with diabetes," said Michael Cloutier, President and CEO, Canadian Diabetes Association. "The North West Company continues to set a high standard for corporate partners to support charitable organizations and we are extremely appreciative for the more than \$2 million raised for the Canadian Diabetes Association."

Grand Chief Harper says "our grassroots people from the MKO First Nations take great pride in being able to take an active role in helping to fight diabetes and introduce a preventative approach to tackling this disease which has claimed the lives of so many of our citizens." Grand Chief Harper continued "as I run this marathon, I carry the memory of my venerable predecessor, Grand Chief Francis Flett, who lost his battle to diabetes 5 years ago; fighting for research, prevention and treatment programs for our diabetic citizen's right to the end of his life on March 9th, 2006."

Today, more than three million Canadians live with diabetes of which, 1 million live with undiagnosed type 2 diabetes. A further six million Canadians live with prediabetes and nearly 50 per cent of them will go on to develop type 2 diabetes. Prediabetes refers to a condition that, if left unchecked, puts you at risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Nearly one in four Canadians either has diabetes or prediabetes. More than 20 people are diagnosed with diabetes every hour of every day, and, according to the Canadian Diabetes Association, by 2020, it is expected that 9.9% of the population will be living with disease. People of Aboriginal descent are three to five times more likely than the general population to develop type 2 diabetes.

### **NWC and Team Diabetes**

The NWC participants include employees from every division of the company – Northern, NorthMart, Giant Tiger, Alaska Commercial Company and Cost-U-Less. The team includes 16 members from the Canadian Far North and special VIP runners – Grand Chief David Harper of Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak and Edward Kennedy, President and CEO of NWC.

Team Diabetes is the national fundraising program for the Canadian Diabetes Association. The program promotes a healthy and active lifestyle for people of all fitness levels. It trains participants to walk or run a half marathon, full marathon, or shorter distance in preparation for several Canadian and international races, while fundraising for the Canadian Diabetes Association.

### **For further information or to schedule an interview, please contact:**

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*The common shares of the parent company, The North West Company Inc., trade on the Toronto Stock Exchange under the symbol "NWF".*

