



Northwest Premium Meat Cooperative

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In the past two weeks, 56 individuals and families in the Bulkley Valley have contributed \$30,000 to ensure the survival of Telkwa's Northwest Premium Meat Co-op. Although the number is below the original target set by members at a planning meeting on June 4th, the prompt and substantial show of support from the community has board members optimistic about the Co-op's future.

"Cheques are coming in every day," says Co-op Chair Paul Davidson, "We're so heartened by this response that we've extended our fundraising deadline until June 30th."

At a meeting with a representative from the Northern Development Initiative on Friday the board received a further windfall: NDI offered to cover the cost of preparing financial statements needed to proceed with a re-financing plan. They also plan to contribute 50% of the cost of developing a business and marketing plan.

"Almost a third of our fundraising target was earmarked for the marketing plan," says Member Communications Chair Aubrey Hunter, "So this offer from NDI takes off some of the pressure."

Despite these advances, the volunteer board isn't slowing down yet.

"We're still only halfway to meeting our outstanding trade payables," says Finance Chair Tricia Kapelari, "Now is still the best time ever to buy a Co-op membership."

So far, the bulk of financial support has come directly from residents of the Bulkley Valley but the board is hopeful that support for the project will expand into other parts of the northwest.

"The show of support from the local community is outstanding," says Emily McGiffin, a board member from Hazelton, "But the Co-op is designed to service the entire northwest. We're hoping to get more members from communities a little further afield as well."

McGiffin points out that with over \$1.7 million in assets, the Co-op is a state-of-the-art meat processing facility that is difficult to replicate.

"It would be great to have one of these in every town," she says, "but that's not going to happen anytime soon. And this project really needs the support of the entire region in order to reach its potential."

The new marketing plan will involve large catchment and marketing areas, focusing on distributing quality meats produced throughout the northwest to as many regional communities as possible. At the same time, careful tracing procedures together with custom slaughter and processing ensure that communities anxious to support local farms can continue to do so.

"It doesn't make sense to import meats from other regions when the Co-op could meet the local demand and keep those dollars and jobs in our communities," says Kapelari, "This is low-hanging fruit in terms of economic diversification."

Anyone interested in making a contribution or becoming a member can drop off a cheque made payable to the Northwest Premium Meat Co-op at the Bulkley Valley Credit Union or mail it to NWPMC (PO Box 278 Telkwa, BC V0J 2X0). For further information, please call the Co-op Chair Paul Davidson at 250 847 3308 (daytime) or 250 847 8823 (evenings) or visit the website: <http://northwestpremiummeat.com>