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Town of Olds first officially-designated Fair Trade Town in Alberta

For Immediate Release, Nov 19, 2009 -- The Town of Olds is now the first officially-designated Fair Trade Town in the province of Alberta. This designation is one more element in the Olds Institute for Community and Regional Development's ongoing work towards being a recognized leader in sustainable development.

Designated by TransFair Canada, the country's only not-for-profit certification and public education organization promoting Fair Trade Certified goods, Olds is now recognized as a supporter of the International Fair Trade system. This system is structured to benefit farmers and workers in developing countries by ensuring they receive fair compensation for their products and labour, can operate under sustainable environmental practices, and receive improved social services and investment in local economic infrastructure.

The impetus for this work began with the Fair Trade Olds committee, a group of volunteers working under the guidance of the Olds Institute's Olds Advisory Group for Sustainable Living (OAGSL). "Becoming Alberta's first Fair Trade Town further distinguishes Olds as a leader in sustainability and confirms our commitment to supporting the principles of Fair Trade," said Cody Becker, OAGSL Chair. "We strongly hope this initiative will help encourage Albertans to make ethical and sustainable choices in their everyday lives."

The criteria for becoming a Fair Trade Town are as follows:

1. The local council uses Fair Trade Certified products and supports the Fair Trade Towns campaign
2. Stores & restaurants offer Fair Trade Certified products
3. Workplaces, faith groups, & schools use and promote Fair Trade Certified products
4. Public awareness events and media coverage held on Fair Trade and the campaign
5. A steering group created for continued commitment
6. Other ethical and sustainable initiatives promoted within the community

"We are extremely pleased to bestow this designation upon the Town of Olds," said Michael Zelmer, Director of Communications for TransFair Canada. "As one of only seven such communities in Canada, they are clearly committed in their efforts to be leaders in sustainable community and regional development."

The Olds Institute is a public volunteer board mandated by the Town Council to conduct community consultation and provide direction to community and economic development initiatives in Olds. The board membership includes representation from Town Council, Olds College, Olds Agricultural Society, Olds and District Chamber of Commerce, Mountain View County, and Chinook's Edge School Division, plus eight members from the public at-large. Its mission is to encourage and facilitate community and regional economic growth and well being.

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