

# Three new members join coalition to attract world-class soybean facility to Manitoba

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

BRANDON — The Westman Opportunities Leadership Group (WOLG) welcomes three new members to its expanding coalition, which is aiming to attract a world-class soybean processing facility to Manitoba. The communities of Russell–Binscarth and Carberry, along with the Neepawa Area Development Corporation (NADCO), are the newest members of the investment attraction initiative.

“The community endorsement and financial support provided by these communities are welcome additions and clear signs of regional support to attract a soybean processing facility,” said Ray Redfern, Chair of WOLG. “In a very short while we have mobilized significant community support. Russell–Binscarth, Carberry and the Neepawa Area Development Corporation joining our group demonstrates there is significant interest and willingness to do business together to attract a soybean facility.

Redfern says that financial contributions from the three new partners are equally significant.

“We have received funding commitments of nearly \$150,000 that will be used to leverage additional support from federal and provincial governments to implement a proactive investment attraction process,” he said.

NADCO seeks to advance the economic interests of Neepawa and the surrounding municipalities of North-Cypress-Langford, Glenella-Lansdowne and Rosedale.

“By joining with WOLG, we believe that this capability now extends into being able to attract a world-class soybean plant to our region,” said Murray Parrott, Chair of NADCO. “We are pleased that Marilyn Crewe, Neepawa’s Economic Development Officer, has been designated our NADCO Board representative. The Leadership Group’s strategic approach to investment attraction makes sense, and brings together the region’s strengths, knowledge and passion, increasing the likelihood of success.”

The newly amalgamated Municipality of Russell–Binscarth was created through the joining of the Village of Binscarth, the former RM of Russell and the Town of Russell, to

create a municipal entity with greater capacity to provide services to the municipality's more than 13,000 residents.

“We are looking forward to working with the Leadership Group to attract a facility to Manitoba, and feel that an excellent business case can be made for locating in our area,” said Nick Foisy, new Board designate from Russell-Binscarth. “Ultimately, we believe that regional benefits are significant and it is important for us to join forces with other communities to ensure this facility comes to Manitoba rather than being built in another jurisdiction”

Carberry is the focal point for potato processing in Manitoba with more than 50 years of production in the area, and hosts the world-class McCain Foods' processing facility.

“We have a track record of attracting major investment to our community that fits with its key strategic assets, namely high quality agricultural production supported by the additional resources of our aquifer,” said Stuart Olmstead, Carberry's Mayor and newly appointed member of the WOLG Board. “We look forward to working with the other communities that are involved in this process, and ultimately talking directly to companies about the benefits of establishing in Carberry. The grass roots effort of WOLG with the community based process is the best way to attract this scale of major investment to Manitoba. Collectively we can make this happen by working hand in hand with our partners to benefit us all.”

“The timing is right to look at processing soybeans here in Manitoba, as nearly 3 million acres of soybeans were planted across Manitoba and eastern Saskatchewan in 2017, a significant increase over 2016 levels,” Redfern said. “We have established an important long-term relationship with Brandon University and its Rural Development Institute (RDI) to support delivery of the project and bring their wide network of experts to validate the opportunity. The significance cannot be understated, as they are providing ongoing support through RDI and providing leadership on the WOLG Board.”

“This truly is a collaborative initiative,” Redfern said. “We now have five regional participants — Brandon, Virden, Russell, Carberry and Neepawa — all working to a common goal. This is real and compelling evidence of the strength of WOLG's community support and of the very inclusive process that we have established to attract a processing facility. All coalition members would like to attract the soybean processing facility to their community, but understand that by doing business together they can combine essential resources to deliver an effective program that creates the tools so necessary for success. Each member recognizes that their own communities will be enhanced by the successful attraction of the plant to Manitoba — wherever it lands is a huge win versus working alone with very limited opportunity for success.”

“Discussions continue with other community governments to confirm their support, and we have had productive discussions with the Provincial and Federal Governments,” Redfern said. “Their support is essential. They will provide needed resources to complete our assessment and to attract the right operator of a soy crush plant. The growing coalition of members provides compelling evidence to senior government that our initiative will be a great investment for their support. WOLG is a volunteer grassroots organization, and is not looking to build a plant – we are focused on attracting the right private sector investment, based upon the economic merits of it to the soy industry, to Manitoba agriculture, and ultimately to all Manitoba communities.”

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### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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