

**WINNIPEG, MANITOBA**

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# Red River Co-operative Ltd.

Organizations are only as strong as their members and supporters. Based on this measurement, the Red River Co-op, with over 203,000 members, is very strong indeed. The Red River Co-op is a dynamic, Winnipeg-based co-operative owned and guided by its members and a dedication to superior customer service.

Red River Co-op's core business is petroleum, which includes gas bars, convenience stores, car washes, bulk fuel delivery, bulk oil, and bulk propane.

The vision of Red River Co-op is to be a preferred customer choice by providing quality products, services, facilities, community partnerships, and the best loyalty program. Their mission is to competitively provide petroleum products and a bulk delivery service, returning the earnings to member-owners in a democratically controlled, environmentally responsible, and profitable manner.

Red River Co-op incorporated in the middle of the "dirty thirties," locating the first outlet in Winnipeg's

West End neighborhood in September of 1937. The Co-op was modeled after the British Rochdale Co-op, which was established in 1844 when a group of English weavers pooled their resources to open their own store in order to share the profits. The Rochdale Co-op was so successful that their founding principles are now used as guidelines for operating co-operatives around the world. These principles include: voluntary and open membership; democratic member control; member economic participation; organizational autonomy and independence; education, training and information for members; cooperation among co-operatives, →



→ and; concern for community.

During the early years, Red River Co-op enhanced operations by amalgamating with other Co-ops in Selkirk, Rosser, Oakbank St. Norbert, St. Agathe and Stonewall. Difficult times came in the late 70's and early 80's, which forced Red River to refocus its business offering by closing non profitable commodities and positioning itself as a petroleum retailer as it remains to date. After eight turbulent years, an equity allocation from earnings was made to the shareholders in 1988. Four years later, a portion in cash was paid out.

Membership has grown to over 188,000 active members, all of whom receive yearly equity and cash back. Red River currently has 23 Gas bars in the City of Winnipeg as well as locations in surrounding rural communities including: Gimli, Teulon, Stonewall, Selkirk, Oakbank, Niverville, St. Agathe, Headingly and presently one in Kenora, Ontario. Red River also sells bulk fuel and has a fleet of six trucks servicing their trading area.

Red River Co-op is owned by its members, who influence the direction of the Cooperative by attending the Annual General Meeting and electing the Board of Directors. The elected Board is responsible for hiring a General Manager, who in turn is responsible for the day to day operations. The Board is also responsible for appointing internal committees that address various responsibilities within the Co-op.

Anyone can join! Individuals and businesses can become members of the Red River Co-op by purchasing a \$5 membership. Once purchased, members are assigned a number which they use when making purchases at all Red River Co-op locations.

All petroleum purchases are totaled annually, and at the end of the year members receive a statement showing their share of the Co-op's profits, known as equity. Every year a portion of total equity earned is paid out in cash to member-owners. Equity/cash back received encourages customer loyalty and ensures continued profits.

In 2011, Red River Co-operative paid back \$29.1 million in cash to its members. This represents a cash rebate of approximately 8 cents per litre purchased per member. Since 2006, Red River has paid out nearly \$142 to its members, while at the same time expanding the co-operative business and services by investing in new and improved facilities worth more than \$55 million.

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In addition to providing equity and cash back to owner-members, Red River Co-op is involved with long and short term community sponsorships and donations that reflect their corporate goals and values. Red River knows that they owe their success to the members and customers they serve and will strive to continually provide top notch service in modern facilities while maintaining a strong financial operating result.

As a co-operative, Red River offers the opportunity to members to have a say in their organization in all the communities they do business in. "Locally owned," "locally controlled," "sharing in the profits" and "your community builder" are not just catch phrase slogans of the Red River Co-op, but are real actions that this Co-operative demonstrates day in day out!