

Wakefield, can you be Canada's next top Fair Trade Town?

By Ian London

Wakefield will become the second "Fair Trade Town" in Canada if Anne Winship has her way.

The village resident and owner of Bean Fair— an organic fair trade coffee distribution business, has set in motion a process that would see Wakefield declared a Fair Trade Town by TransFair Canada, a national non-profit organization that promotes fair trade products.

"Wolfville, Nova Scotia is the first Fair Trade Town in Canada," Winship said, explaining that to earn the designation a community must be able to demonstrate support for fair trade from local government, faith groups, media, businesses, and members of the public. "It seemed like a great project. We're already so close to being there it's amazing."

Wakefield eateries Soupcon, Chez Eric, and Café Molo already serve Fair Trade products while retailers like Organic Boulevard, the Wakefield General Store, Solstice Books and Pipolinka Bakery are among those selling them. On June 4 La Peche council adopted a motion to serve only fair trade certified tea, coffee, and sugar at municipal meeting and events, and Winship is lobbying the local United Church to join the effort.

"We're way over the targets set by TransFair Canada already. It's like almost every business has a link to fair trade," she said. "I think it's good for Wakefield to get the designation."

The only obstacles standing in the way of Wakefield becoming a Fair Trade Town under TransFair Canada guidelines are the support of local faith groups and schools, elements Winship plans to have in place once the summer is over.

"That's the part we'll be doing in the fall, the religious institutions and the schools," she said. "(United Church Minister) Gisele Gilfillan has offered to

host a community-wide event in the fall, a showing of the documentary film *Black Gold*."



Fair pastry: Anne Winship chows on a fair trade croissant at Pipolinka Bakery in Wakefield.

Ian London photo

Black Gold documents the struggle of Tadesse Meskela, manager of the Ethiopian Oromia Coffee Farmers cooperative Union, who travels the globe trying to convince western coffee buyers to give the over 70,000 farmers he represents a fair price for their product.

It's a struggle Winship is well acquainted with in her own life

selling fair trade coffee to retailers throughout the Ottawa and Outaouais areas. But in the course of her work she's noticed consumers in her own community are particularly receptive to fair trade products, and she thinks it's time Wakefield earned a little recognition for it.

"Wakefield has been tremendously supportive all along, my biggest sales are always at the General Store," she said. "I think we're pretty much on track."

Winship has assembled a task force of Wakefield community and business representatives to help guide the bid to win the designation for the village. The group is always looking for additional ideas or individuals to help. Contact her at 819-459-2653 or beanfair@magma.ca so for more information. Otherwise, she said to keep supporting fair trade products and businesses, and stay tuned for the celebration when Wakefield becomes Canada's second officially recognized Fair Trade Town.

"When it's official there will be much hoo-haw," she promised.