

# Fair trade certification explored



By Jim Mosher

GIMLI — Plumbing fair trade was top of mind Tuesday, as a small group of students and interested adults gathered to hear one person's take on the global movement to ensure primary producers get a fair shake in their trade with the rest of the world.

One component of establishing which products are 'fair trade' is certification, according to Michael Zelmer, community relations manager with Transfair Canada.

Zelmer offered his insights about fair trade. About seven years ago, Zelmer travelled to Nicaragua with Oxfam. He would later obtain his Masters degree with a dissertation about the significance of fair trade in the Central American country.

Oxfam and other non-profits pioneered what we now know as fair trade. At its inception the move to ensure primary producers were fairly compensated was called alternative trade.

Transfair Canada has a logo that can be affixed to products that meet its criteria for fair trade products. In order for a coffee wholesaler to get the designation, there has to be assurance that the primary producer receives, at a minimum, US\$1.25 a pound and a 10¢ fair trade premium, for instance. Zelmer said every single stage in the supply chain is audited from the producer to the exporter to the importer to the roaster. "They all have to report, and they're all audited," he said.

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This group is working to have Gimli designated a fair trade town. Seated from left: Gimli High School teacher-liaison to the school's Social Justice Committee Rob Jantz, Brittany Cuthbert (Youth Community Partnership), Emily Lair (YCP), Jeannine Lebernik, constituency assistant to Gimli MLA Peter Bjornson, Alicia Sylvester (YCP) and Bradley Johnson (YCP); and standing, from left, Gimli deputy mayor Ross Bailey, Laura Power (Manitoba Council on International Cooperation), Zack Gross (MCIC), Transfair Canada community relations officer Michael Zelmer and Riverton Collegiate Institute teacher Karen Gallagher.