

Farmers Market to help low-income families

By Ryan Jensen

The Bulkley Valley Farmers Market has joined the provincial government's Farmers' Market Nutrition and Coupon Project.

The 17-week project will give up to 50 low-income families in the region better access to nutritious locally-grown food by providing them with \$15 in coupons each week that can be used to buy fresh produce, meat, eggs and any other unprepared foods typically found at the farmers' market.

Additionally, the families participating in the program will work with the Smithers Pregnancy Outreach Program to develop knowledge and skill in preparing healthy meals using fresh food. Eligible families will be identified by a non-profit organization in Smithers and coupons will be distributed each week.

"I'm pleased that this year the Bulkley Valley Farmers' Market will join this important program," said MLA Dennis MacKay. "Working with the Smithers Pregnancy Outreach Program, this project provides our families with access to local food and the skills to prepare healthy food."

The provincial government provided \$750,000 to the B.C. Association of Farmers' Markets to expand the project this year. Smithers is one of 10 communities in the province taking part in 2008. Across B.C., about 2,000 low-income families will be taking part. Next year, the project will be expanded to include 20 communities in B.C.