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NEWS RELEASE

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Matt Wrazidlo, Meat Processor - (218) 729-3442

New meat processing retail store open at Northeast Regional Corrections Center

The final step of a more than decade-long effort is now complete. The Northeast Regional Corrections Center (NERCC), which completed its new meat processing facility last fall, now has attained the necessary authorizations to open a retail store to sell meat to the public.

The new meat processing retail store is open Monday-Thursday, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at NERCC, 6102 Abrahamson Road in Saginaw. Beginning May 1, the store's schedule will expand to be open Monday-Saturday. The store offers a variety of poultry, beef, pork and sausage, all cut and prepared on site by NERCC residents as part of a job training program.

NERCC is part of the Arrowhead Regional Corrections system and has operated as a “work farm that works” since the 1930s, producing the meat and produce used to feed residents, while at the same time teaching a variety of life and job skills. This model has a history of success, increasing an individual's odds of finding employment upon release and reducing recidivism rates.

The state legislature assisted NERCC through three separate bonding bills – in 2015, 2017 and 2020 – authorizing funds for a new meat processing facility, which opened last fall. (The previous buildings dated back to the 1940s and no longer were up to code.)

The new meat processing facility, which opened last fall, is approximately double the size of the previous one, providing much needed space and state of the art equipment for the program, which processes thousands of chickens, turkeys, pigs, sheep and cows each year.

For the retail store to open, NERCC needed additional permits from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, the USDA, and others. That process is now complete.

“The meat processing program has been a good service for our residents, teaching skills and setting them up for a future career when they leave here,” said Wally Kostich, ARC Executive Director. “Now, with the addition of the retail store, we are able to make this program a service to our community, as well, by offering for sale quality meats freshly processed and prepared right here on site.”

NERCC is a 136-bed facility located on a 3,200-acre working farm that produces chickens, turkeys and pigs, along with flowers, vegetables, hay and barley. It also offers programs that teach carpentry, food service, animal husbandry, mechanics and maintenance skills. NERCC is operated by Arrowhead Regional Corrections, a joint powers agency providing correctional services to Carlton, Cook, Koochiching, Lake and St. Louis Counties.

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