

ASHLAND, WIS —Northland College and Big Water Coffee Roasters have teamed up to develop and cross-market a coffee blend they're calling Fenenga Fuel with the tagline, "coffee to feed your fire."

The College and Big Water located in Bayfield, Wis. will introduce the campus and the community to this sweet and smoky blend at Fenenga Fest Wed., Nov. 20 at the Ponzio Campus Center from 3-5 p.m. Participants should expect fun with mustaches — Fenenga sported a distinct one — and coffee samples.

The College chose the name Fenenga Fuel for its first College President M.J. Fenenga. Fenenga was a can-do president who brought industry, ingenuity and academic rigor to the campus. — he was the type who could fix the furnace if need be, said Rick Smith, vice president of institutional marketing and enrollment management.

"We really wanted a name unique to Northland College and that would resonate with Northland College alumni and the community — nearly every Northland grad since 1966 has lived in Fenenga Hall," Smith said.

At first glance, Ewalt said she needed convincing on the name — for its potential pronunciation problems. "The spelling is phonetic though— that helps," she said.

As she learned more about Fenenga and what he did for the future stability of the College, she was convinced. Plus she says, "Fenenga Fuel — it's fun to say out loud."

Fenenga Fuel has been served in the cafeteria since September. Wednesday marks the first official rollout of the new partnership and the coffee to the public.

The coffee partnership fits into the local foods initiative now in its second year at Northland College. The first priority is to purchase food from within 100 miles of the College. The second priority is to purchase foods and work with businesses from within 250 miles.

Last year, Northland College exceeded its ambitious local and regional foods annual goal of 20 percent — reaching 25.4 percent. The College remains on track to meet its new annual goal of 30 percent. In October alone, 46.9 percent of the food consumed in the cafeteria and snack bar was local and regional.

The ultimate annual goal is 80 percent, said Regional Sustainability Coordinator Nathan Engstrom.

Northland's success has been built on relationships with producers, growers and businesses to create new structures and systems for distribution, Engstrom said.

"Working with Big Water Coffee Rosters on co-branding Fenenga Fuel is the best tangible measure of the uniqueness of this initiative and of the personal relationships that have come from this model," Engstrom said.

Northland's commitment to sustainability and local foods fits with Big Water Coffee Roasters commitment to quality and our community, said Danielle Ewalt who co-owns Big Water with her husband, Jon.

"We want partners for promoting coffee and the region," Ewalt said. "Northland's mission aligns with ours — we make similar decisions like buying milk from the local dairy."

Fenenga Fuel is their first co-branded coffee and will be sold exclusively through Northland College and Big Water Coffee Roasters. Fenenga Fuel is available at the Ponzio Campus Center Store, Big Water Coffee Roasters in Bayfield or online at northland.edu/coffee.