EMP
METALS CORP.

EMP METALS PROVIDES FIRST HALF 2026 CORPORATE UPDATE

VANCOUVER, BC, July 8, 2026 /CNW/ - EMP Metals Corp. (CSE: EMPS) (OTCQB: EMPPF) (FSE: 9ST) ("EMP Metals" or the "Company") is pleased to provide a corporate update highlighting significant milestones achieved during the first half of 2026 as the Company advances Project Aurora toward demonstration operations.

The first six months of 2026 have been transformational for EMP Metals as the Company advanced Project Aurora from construction into commissioning while strengthening its financial position and securing key government support. During the period, EMP completed major site infrastructure, received all required project permits, initiated commissioning activities, introduced first raw brine into the demonstration facility, and continued advancing toward integrated demonstration operations.

Construction and Site Development

Field development activities progressed significantly during the first half of the year, including successful workover programs on the Company's brackish water supply well and disposal well, establishing the infrastructure required to support continuous flow plant operations.

Construction of the demonstration facility also progressed substantially, with completion of the site's major infrastructure, including the process building, office trailers, site storage facilities, and installation of permanent piping connecting the demonstration facility directly to the wellhead.

The Company also received all major process equipment from Saltworks, marking completion of equipment deliveries for the demonstration plant and allowing construction to transition into commissioning.

Permitting and Regulatory Milestones

EMP successfully secured all key regulatory approvals and land access agreements required to advance Project Aurora. These approvals represent an important milestone in de-risking the project and ensured construction and commissioning activities progressed on schedule throughout the first half of the year.

Commissioning Progress

Commissioning activities continue to progress on schedule, with approximately 50% of the overall commissioning program now complete, building upon the factory commissioning completed at Saltworks. Saltworks has mobilized its commissioning and operations team to site, where work is underway across the integrated processing systems.

On July 1, 2026, a significant operational milestone was achieved with the successful introduction of the first raw brine into the pre-conditioning process system. The Company has now begun optimizing system performance and tuning the process using raw brine from the reservoir. The Company remains on track to complete commissioning activities in Q3 before transitioning into fully integrated demonstration operations and process optimization.

The introduction of raw brine marks the transition from mechanical commissioning to process commissioning, where operating parameters will be optimized under continuous flow conditions. Data generated during this phase will form the basis for commercial engineering and future economic studies. Performance metrics will be released once commissioning is complete.

Financing and Government Support

To support continued advancement of Project Aurora, EMP successfully completed an oversubscribed financing during the first half of 2026, further strengthening the Company's balance sheet as it enters the demonstration phase.

The Company also secured significant non-dilutive government support through approvals under the BC Innovative Clean Energy (BCIN) Fund and the National Industry-Led Network of Centres of Excellence (NGen) program. In addition, EMP received its first funding allocation under the Saskatchewan Critical Minerals Innovation Incentive (SCMII), reflecting continued government recognition of the strategic importance of domestic lithium development and critical mineral processing.

EMP Metals CEO Karl Kottmeier commented, "The first half of 2026 marked a pivotal period for EMP as we transitioned Project Aurora from construction into commissioning. Every major objective we established for the first half of the year has been achieved, including completing site infrastructure, receiving all major equipment, securing regulatory approvals, strengthening our balance sheet, and introducing first brine into the demonstration plant. As we enter the second half of 2026, our focus shifts to completing commissioning, optimizing the integrated process, and generating the operating data that will support commercial-scale development."

Project Aurora is EMP's integrated, continuous-flow lithium refining demonstration system designed to process ten (10) m^3/day of raw brine from wellhead to lithium chemicals. The facility is intended to validate process performance, optimize operating parameters, and generate engineering and economic data to support future commercial-scale development.

The demonstration program represents a key step toward commercializing EMP's lithium brine resource in Saskatchewan. Operational data generated throughout the demonstration campaign will support engineering design, process optimization, and economic evaluation for a future modular commercial facility capable of producing more than 3,000 tonnes per year of lithium products.

EMP's Saskatchewan lithium resource continues to benefit from favourable brine chemistry free of hydrogen sulfide (H.S) and oil-derived organics, shallow low-cost drilling, established infrastructure, and a supportive critical minerals regulatory environment, positioning the Company to pursue initial commercial modules targeting 1,500 to 3,000 annually, expandable thereafter.

About EMP Metals

EMP is a Canadian-based lithium exploration and development company focused on large-scale resources using direct lithium extraction (DLE). EMP currently holds over 205,000 net acres (83,000 hectares) of Subsurface Dispositions and strategic wellbores in Southern Saskatchewan.

For more information, please go to the Company's website at www.empmetals.com

Forward-Looking Statements

Information set forth in this news release contains forward-looking statements that are based on assumptions as of the date of this news release. These statements reflect management's current estimates, beliefs, intentions and expectations. They are not guarantees of future performance. EMP Metals cautions that all forward-looking statements are inherently uncertain, and that actual performance may be affected by a number of material factors, many of which are beyond EMP Metals' control. Such factors include, among other things: risks and uncertainties relating to EMP Metals' limited operating history, ability to obtain sufficient financing to carry out its exploration and development objectives on its mineral properties, obtaining the necessary permits to carry out its activities and the need to comply with environmental and governmental regulations. Accordingly, actual and future events, conditions and results may differ materially from the estimates, beliefs, intentions and expectations expressed or implied in the forward-looking information. Except as required under applicable securities legislation, EMP Metals undertakes no obligation to publicly update or revise forward-looking information.

The Canadian Securities Exchange has neither approved nor disapproved the information contained herein and does not accept responsibility for the adequacy or accuracy of this news release.

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For further information: Karl Kottmeier, CEO, karl@pemgroup.ca, Phone: 1-604-689-7422; Paul Schubach, COO, paul@empmetals.com, Phone: 1-306-519-8341

CO: EMP Metals Corp.

CNW 07:55e 08-JUL-26