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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Lakota Funds' Lending Department Hits a New Record by Reaching the \$6 Million Mark in Loans Disbursed

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Kyle, South Dakota – *May 11, 2012* – Lakota Funds has reported that as of mid-April 2012, they have disbursed over \$6 million in loans. To be exact, the lending department has deployed 790 loans totaling \$6,060,768.71, resulting in 1,235 jobs created or retained and 446 businesses started or expanded on the Pine Ridge Reservation or within a 25 mile surrounding radius.

“We have more local businesses now than ever before to provide much-needed products and services to our community members. This eliminates significant travel expenses for the residents of Pine Ridge and stops the drain on our local economy. Every local business that is started strengthens our local economy and reignites our traditional Lakota value of self-sufficiency,” says Tawney Brunsch, Executive Director of Lakota Funds.

Lakota Funds, established in 1986 as the first Native American community development financial institution (CDFI), offers a variety of loan products and assistance designed to help Native entrepreneurs overcome the barriers to starting a business on reservation land. Starting out as a micro lender offering \$500 loans, Lakota Funds' maximum loan size is now \$200,000. The organization also employs a full staff of business success coaches that work closely with entrepreneurs on the path to business ownership and help address challenges that may arise.

Lakota Funds has been involved in a variety of landmark accomplishments related to Pine Ridge Reservation's overall economic development strategy. They developed the Lakota Trade Center, a 12,000-square-foot small business incubator and home of the Tribal Business Information Center. Lakota Funds made history by creating the first Native American tax credit financed low-income housing project in America, Eagle Nest Housing in Wanblee, South Dakota, and they are now preparing tenants to become homeowners. They co-founded the first Native American chamber of commerce on an Indian reservation, and this model is now being duplicated on other reservations. In addition, Lakota Funds is leading the development of the Lakota Federal Credit Union, which will be the first depository financial institution on the Pine Ridge Reservation since 1935.

“While we have made history in a lot of ways, the best part of our job is seeing how our products and services change the lives of the Oglala Lakota Oyate,” states Ms. Brunsch. “It's knowing that we made a difference in somebody's life and that their accomplishments will make a difference in their children's lives that motivates us to keep doing what we do.”

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About Lakota Funds

Lakota Funds is a Native community development financial institution (CDFI) leading an economic resurgence of the Oglala Lakota Oyate on the Pine Ridge Reservation through culturally appropriate strategies reigniting the traditional Lakota spirit of productivity, commerce, and trade. For over 25 years, Lakota Funds has played a vital role in improving the quality of life for the Oglala Lakota Oyate by placing capital with new and growing businesses, providing customized business development services, and educating adults and youth on financial management concepts.