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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wiyaka Wicasa, Local Lawn Care Business, Expands to Offer Wood Vending and Hauling Services to Residents of Pine Ridge Reservation

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Kyle, South Dakota – *April 25, 2012* – Marlen Featherman, member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and owner of Wiyaka Wicasa, has expanded his business to offer complete lawn care, wood vending, and trash hauling for residential and commercial clients of the Pine Ridge Reservation. The expansion of Wiyaka Wicasa, the only full-service landscaping businesses on the reservation, is part of a growth trend in the local economy which is bringing more services than ever before to community members.

To make this expansion possible, Featherman completed the matched savings program at Lakota Funds where he earned \$3 for every \$1 he deposited into a specialized savings account. Featherman then leveraged his savings to obtain a business loan for a vehicle and equipment purchase, which enabled the expansion. With the new equipment, Wiyaka Wicasa is now assisting with the renovation of Eagle Nest Housing Development by providing hauling services, as well as tilling and mowing for residents. Although he is working alone now, Featherman plans to add one employee to Wiyaka Wicasa during his second year of operations.

"Not only will Wiyaka Wicasa provide employment opportunities where there once were none, but Marlen will be able to pass down his entrepreneurial values to his three daughters," states Tonia Young, Business Success Coach at Lakota Funds, who worked with Featherman during his business expansion process. "We know this is an essential component to break the multi-generational cycle of poverty that the Oglala Lakota have endured for over 100 years."

Featherman states that the best part of running Wiyaka Wicasa is sharing the pride people feel for their home when it is freshly trimmed and clean, "I like making yards look nice, and I'm trying to help our reservation look nice." Wiyaka Wicasa is now accepting new clients, and owner Marlen Featherman can be contacted at 605-407-6594.

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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.