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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Business Ownership Brings Family Back to Hometown of Oelrichs

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Oelrichs, South Dakota – *July 28, 2016* – Randy and Jessica Hamar recently became the new owners of The Office, a bar, restaurant, and the cornerstone of Oelrichs, South Dakota for over 20 years. Originally from Oelrichs, Jessica Hamar (previously Dryden) is glad to be back to her hometown after living in Chadron, Nebraska for 15 years.

“We thought it would be a great place to come home to and finish out the rest of our working years. It’s an investment for our family and the community, but the community also does a good job of supporting us as well,” says Jessica.

Jessica had a corporate career doing sales and marketing for Fortune 500 companies, and Randy had been a mechanic for over 25 years. However, the Hamar’s had always wanted to own their own business. “When The Office came up for sale, we jumped on it,” said Jessica.

To make their dream come true the Hamar’s approached Lakota Funds, a community loan fund in Kyle, South Dakota for start-up capital. Applying for a commercial loan was a new process for them, but one that the staff at Lakota Funds walked through with them.

“They did a really good job at understanding what the vision was and came down to see The Office beforehand,” said Jessica.

“Capital is one of the biggest challenges for new business owners, and we are glad that we can help so many entrepreneurs fill that gap. But it’s not just about the money. It’s also about self-sufficiency, family, and community revitalization,” says Tony Taylor, Loan Officer at Lakota Funds who worked with the Hamar’s.

Jessica says that one of the best things about being back in Oelrichs is that her son gets to see grandma and grandpa all the time. She adds, “It’s so nice to be home. I’m so glad to be surrounded by people with good values that are genuine. It’s fun to see everyone every day, too.”

Although it was a scary step and a complete life change, Jessica says becoming the new owners of The Office has also been exciting. She says, “The best thing is being able to create your own dream and being able to build something we know is good for the community.”

They face the regular challenges associated with the restaurant business – staffing, timing supply orders, and establishing good routines. Jessica points out those challenges are compounded with their isolated rural location. “It’s not like we can just run next door and pick up some more things if we run out.” But, she also acknowledges that the support of her



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family and community ease the burden of those challenges. “It’s a challenge, but it’s a good challenge,” says Jessica.

The Office currently employs two part-time staff, but Jessica and Randy have plans to keep growing the business and even add on a beer garden in the future. They encourage people to stop in if they are passing near Oelrichs.

Jessica says, “The food is good, and the beer is always cold!”

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About Lakota Funds

Lakota Funds, a Native community development financial institution (CDFI) established more than 25 years ago, 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. Lakota Funds' mission is to promote economic sustainability on the Pine Ridge Reservation and geographic service area, through business loans, technical assistance, and wealth building education for families and businesses.