

## **TWO NATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS RECEIVE NATIONAL AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE**

*Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation and Four Directions Development Corporation  
Recognized for Outstanding Work*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.///October 31, 2006///** As Native community development financial institutions (NCDFIs), Native economic development practitioners and tribal representatives from across the U.S. gathered in Washington, D.C. to share ideas and learn about ways to promote Native development and integrated asset building strategies, two of the Native institutions -- Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation (CPCDC) and Four Directions Development Corporation – were honored today with awards for their outstanding work.

The awards were presented during the first ever Native CDFI Award Ceremony and Reception in conjunction with the third annual Native CDFI Convening hosted by OFN and Oweesta. The Native CDFI Convening is part of OFN's 22<sup>nd</sup> annual conference in Washington, D.C., which continues through November 2, 2006.

Elsie Meeks, Executive Director for Oweesta, said **"While, in general, community and economic development work is certainly not without its challenges, doing this type of work in Native communities can be especially hard. For many Native people and tribes, the idea of private assets and ownership is often viewed as diametrically opposed to their cultural ways and traditions. Therefore, we wanted to honor the efforts of those who are committed to making Native CDFIs a force for change in their communities."**

Opportunity Finance Network President & CEO Mark Pinsky said: **"Native CDFIs are demonstrating the power of opportunity. With the support of the CDFI Fund (within the U.S. Treasury Department), Oweesta First Nations and Opportunity Finance are supporting a new network of Native CDFIs serving underserved native markets. In many Native communities, CDFIs represent the sole access to capital or one of the very few means of accessing a financial institution."**

Citizen Potawatomi Community Development Corporation was the recipient of the Circle of Honor Award which recognizes the outstanding achievements made by a NCDIFI. CPCDC, led by Kristi Coker, is a tribally-chartered non-profit corporation operating in Shawnee, Oklahoma. By offering a combination of training, technical assistance, loans and financial education, CPCDC helps create businesses that provide needed products and services for the people of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. CPCDC's three key lending programs provide micro business, commercial, and emergency employee loans . To date, CPCDC has made 76 micro business loans, investing over \$5 million in Native owned businesses, and has made 339 loans to Citizen Potawatomi Nation employees totaling over \$300,000. The result has been an increase in the number of jobs available for community members along with a dynamic strengthening and growth of Citizen Potawatomi small businesses.

The first ever Visionary Leader Award for Outstanding Achievement was awarded to Susan Hammond, the founding executive director of Four Directions Development Corporation located in Orono, Maine.

Four Directions was launched in 2001 and has since built a portfolio of \$2 million in housing and small business loans, and a diverse network of Native and non-Native partners ranging from bankers to Quakers. Susan has also led Four Directions into a state-wide effort, bringing services to all of the tribes in Maine.

Oweesta's Director of Training and Technical Assistance, Stewart Sarkozy-Banoczy said: **"CPCDC is being recognized because it is a very strong financial organization with diverse sources of capital. It provides an innovative loan product that effectively meets the market demands of the community, and their target market includes all members of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, regardless of geographic location, and all residents of the community regardless of tribal affiliation."**

Stewart Sarkozy-Banoczy continued: **"Susan Hammond deserves praise for her truly visionary leadership in two areas: first, she expanded Four Directions Development Corporation to include all four federally-recognized tribes in Maine, and second, she turned the gaming initiative in Maine, which was perceived as a defeat for the tribes, into an opportunity by initiating the *Giving Winds* capital campaign. Susan is a forward thinker and dynamic problem solver. I congratulate her on winning the Visionary Leader Award".**

The Native CDFI Awards featured a special performance by singer/songwriter Bill Miller. Bill Miller is Mohican from northern Wisconsin and received a Grammy Award for Best Native American Recording in 2005 for CEDAR DREAM SONGS.

Panelists and other presenters featured during the OFN/Oweesta Native Convening were: Tom Klyve of White Earth Investment Initiative; Dave Fleming of Lac Courte Oreilles Credit Union; Kristi Coker of Citizen Potawatomi CDC; Tanya Fiddler of Four Bands Community Fund; Elsie Meeks and Stewart Sarkozy-Banoczy of Oweesta; and Mamata Datta of Opportunity Finance Network

Representatives of the following NCDFIs, CDFIs, support organizations and tribal institutions were on hand at the awards ceremony and at the Native Convening: Aleutian Housing Authority; Aneth Community Development Corporation; Bank of America; California Indian Manpower Consortium; Cascadia Revolving Fund; CDFI Fund; Central Oregon Partnership-Warm Springs Advocate; CFED; Citizen Potawatomi; Cooperative Fund of New England Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; Oweesta; First Nations Development Institute; Four Corners Enterprise Community; Four Directions Development Corporation; Habitat for Humanity International; Hopi Credit Association; US Department of Housing and Urban Development; Indian Land Capital Company; Key Bank; Keweenaw Bay Indian Community; Laguna Housing Development and Management Enterprise; Lummi CDFI; Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nations; Midwest Minnesota CDC; Native American Capital; Native TANF Programs; Navajo Partnership for Housing; Pascua Yaqui Tribe; Pokagon Band of Potawatomi; Rural Community Assistance Corporation; Rural Community Innovations; Salt River Financial Services Institution; Sicangu Fund; Teton Coalition; The Annie E. Casey Foundation; The Lakota Fund; The Sequoyah Fund; Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa; USDA/Rural Development; Washington Mutual; Wigamig Owners Loan Fund; and the Wind River Development Fund.

**CONTACT:** Jeanine Plant, (212) 245-0510 or [jplant@pro-mediacomunications.com](mailto:jplant@pro-mediacomunications.com).  
Jody Sarkozy-Banoczy, (605) 342-3770 or [jsarkozy@oweesta.org](mailto:jsarkozy@oweesta.org)