

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
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### **“The New Normal” — Opportunity Finance Network to hold 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference**

**WHAT:** On Tuesday, October 27, 2009, Opportunity Finance Network (OFN)—the leading network of private financial institutions delivering opportunities for low-wealth people and communities in the U.S.—will kick off their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference for opportunity finance and community development financial institution (CDFI) professionals. The theme of the 2009 Opportunity Finance Network Conference is **“The New Normal.”**

**WHEN:** Tuesday, October 27, 2009 through Friday, October 30, 2009

**WHERE:** Westin Hotel, 601 S. Charlotte Street, Charlotte, N.C. 28202

#### **CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS:**

- **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.** OFN celebrates 25 years of the conference with a special opening plenary that brings the past alive and looks toward the future. You’ll meet the pioneers who created a movement and hear what they and today’s CDFI leaders see for the next 25 years.
- **Best of times, worst of times.** CDFIs across the spectrum are facing liquidity, portfolio, and operating challenges while trying to respond to skyrocketing demand. At the same time, highly promising developments—CDFIs’ access to economic stimulus funds, an increased CDFI Fund appropriation, and more—are providing CDFIs with big new opportunities. The conference will help CDFIs navigate this “best of times, worst of times” with a Stabilization & Growth core curriculum that will cover vital topics such as risk management, liquidity, capitalization, operating constraints, and strategic issues.
- **The Wachovia NEXT Awards for Opportunity Finance.** On Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, six awardees of the third annual \$8.75 million Wachovia NEXT Awards for Opportunity Finance will be announced. The Wachovia NEXT Awards for Opportunity Finance shines a bright light on the great successes of our industry.
- **The Ned Gramlich Lifetime Achievement Award.** On Wednesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, Mark Pinsky, President and CEO of OFN, will announce the recipient of this special award, named for the late Federal Reserve Board Governor Edward (Ned) Gramlich. The award honors a lifetime of achievement in responsible finance. Last year, Cliff Rosenthal, President of the New York-based National Federation of Community Development Credit Unions, received this honor. Rosenthal is the nation’s leading voice and advocate for credit unions serving low-income communities across the United States.



- **Native Gathering and Awards.** Hosted by OFN and the Oweesta Corporation, this gathering of non-Native and Native professionals on Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, will explore the work of Native CDFIs and how they are transforming Native communities. The 2009 Native CDFI Awards will be announced that same day.
- **Tours.** A walking tour of small and micro business development in Asheville, North Carolina will introduce participants to entrepreneurs financed by Mountain BizWorks. An opportunity finance tour in Charlotte, North Carolina will focus on credit union member stories from Wachovia NEXT Awards for Opportunity Finance awardee Latino Community Credit Union. A housing development financed by Self-Help in a low-income neighborhood will also be covered. Finally, the Catawba Cultural Center tour will focus on aboriginal Catawba Indians, including their culture, language, and pottery.

OFN expects up to 600 conference attendees, including: CDFI and opportunity finance institution staff, executives and board members; Native community development professionals and tribal leaders; investment managers; foundation program staff; bankers; CDFI consultants; policy advisors and policy makers; and community and economic development specialists. For more information about the OFN Conference 2009, visit: [www.opportunityfinance.net/conference](http://www.opportunityfinance.net/conference)

"In October, we will meet to discuss, debate, and respond to a set of external and internal challenges greater than our industry has ever experienced," said CEO & President of Opportunity Finance Network Mark Pinsky. "*The New Normal* is one way of describing the fact that much of what we have come to expect is no longer certain. Our strength is our commitment to working together. *The New Normal* has already strengthened the ties that bind CDFIs to one another and to their partners."

**Press opportunities:** The conference is **open to a limited number of journalists** who register in advance. Interested journalists should contact CoCo Chang at 212.245.0510 or [jcoco@pro-mediacomunications.com](mailto:jcoco@pro-mediacomunications.com) to arrange for your press pass.

**Registration:** For a complete listing of sessions, presenters, and Conference events, and to register for the conference (beginning August 3<sup>rd</sup>), go to: [www.opportunityfinance.net/conference](http://www.opportunityfinance.net/conference). The conference registration fee is \$575 for Opportunity Finance Network Members and \$725 for nonmembers. You can save \$25 if you register before September 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Opportunity Finance Network (OFN)**, the leading national network of more than 160 private financial institutions, creates growth that is good for communities, investors, individuals, and the economy. Members of OFN are community development financial institutions (CDFIs) who deliver responsible lending to help low-wealth and low-income communities join the economic mainstream. To date, the opportunity finance industry has financed more than \$25 billion in underserved markets in all 50 states, yielding more than **200,000 jobs, 500,000 housing units, and 5,000 community facility projects**. More information is available at: [www.opportunityfinance.net](http://www.opportunityfinance.net).

**Conference sponsors include:** Bank of America as the Platinum Sponsor; Capital One, Citi Foundation, The Home Depot Foundation, and Wachovia as Gold Sponsors; HSBC as the Silver Sponsor; Federal Home Loan Bank and JPMorgan Chase as Bronze Sponsors. The Community Leader is PNC Bank. The Community Sponsor is Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing. The Local Co-hosts include: Latino Community Credit Union, Mountain BizWorks, North Carolina Community Development Initiative, Self-Help, and SJF Ventures. The Regional Co-Hosts include: Appalachian Community Enterprises, Community Redevelopment Loan and Investment Fund, The Housing Fund, Piedmont Housing Alliance, Richmond Economic Development Corporation, Southeast Community Capital, Virginia Community Capital, and Virginia Community Development Fund.

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