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Native American Initiative Selected for Major Funding from National Rural Funders Collaborative

DALLAS, TX—(April 4, 2007)—The Indian Land Tenure Foundation (ILTF) and Native American Community Development Corporation (NACDC) have been selected to receive a major grant from the National Rural Funders Collaborative (NRFC) to support their initiative to help reservations in Montana and Wyoming move toward greater economic sovereignty. The two organizations will receive \$300,000 each year for the next two years.

Aiding the tribes to regain the control of—and effectively manage—productive assets including land, financial and cultural assets is at the heart of the ILTF/NACDC initiative. Indian reservations have traditionally been geographically, culturally and economically isolated from surrounding non-Indian communities. Together with tribal leaders, the initiative will sponsor a series of facilitated community meetings with tribes across the two states, and encourage and support the development of action plans to achieve community goals. Financial education, mentoring, homeownership counseling, small business development assistance and land acquisition financing will be available. The goal is for tribes to eventually compete successfully in their larger geographic/political regions and to work closely with surrounding communities on issues of common concern.

“During the past few years, the tribes in Montana and Wyoming have been playing an increasing role in their regions,” said Cris Stainbrook, president of ILTF. “The overall population of the Plains states has been decreasing, but the population on Indian reservations is growing. Nearly 50 percent of tribal members are 18 years old and younger. There is great potential for innovation and the development of future tribal leaders and staff, and whose interests are in building alternative economies based on the historic assets of land and culture. The grant from NRFC gives us a real opportunity to work with the tribal leaders and their communities. Whether it is land acquisition, financial education or small business development, we’d like to support their efforts and provide tools and assistance to help them move forward.”

"The answers to challenges facing Indian Country have always existed within tribal communities and are often rooted in the effort to achieve tribal economic sovereignty. This grant

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and NACDC working with ILTF increases our capacity to support individual tribal efforts to pursue those answers," adds NACDC Executive Director Elouise Cobell.

"We are pleased to announce the selection of the Indian Land Tenure Foundation and Native American Community Development Corporation as one of our new grantees," said NRFC Executive Director Jim Richardson. "The initiative will support the efforts of Indian communities in Montana and Wyoming to undertake or expand strategies for community- and cultural-based economic development. Native Americans have a long history of valuing tribal sovereignty and self-determination, and this initiative will help move them toward economic stability based on land, culture, wealth creation and connections to mainstream economies outside the reservations."

The Indian Land Tenure Foundation (ILTF) and Native American Community Development Corporation (NACDC) initiative is one of five regional initiatives across the country to receive funding from NRFC. Other recipients include marketumbrella.org in New Orleans to increase access to markets and opportunities for urban and rural farmers throughout the Gulf Coast and Mid South regions; the Tallulah Conversion Project to convert a private detention facility into a regional college and workforce development center in Louisiana; and initiatives in the Salinas and Pájaro Valleys and South Monterey County in California to support wealth creation opportunities and small farm/small business development among farmworkers and immigrants. Each of the new grantees will receive \$150,000 to \$300,000 annually for an initial period of two years, with the possibility of a three-year extension.

NRFC is a collaborative philanthropic initiative of eleven private U.S. foundations and organized to expand resources for families and communities in regions of persistent poverty. NRFC recognizes that poverty is often a factor of race, class, culture, and power dynamics that are linked and concentrated and that the reinvention of rural economies is fundamental to eliminating rural poverty and effecting long-term transformative change in rural America. Therefore, NRFC supports community-based empowerment strategies designed to transform poor rural communities and regions into healthy and viable living environments and seeks to build a movement of support and advocacy for alternative rural economies based on community assets of culture, land and human capital and grounded in relationships and values of equity and justice.

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To learn more about the Indian Land Tenure Foundation or the Native American Community Development Corporation: www.indianlandtenure.org and www.nacdc.org

For more information on NRFC: www.nrfc.org