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**South Dakota Indian Business Alliance and CFED Partner to Deliver the Native Entrepreneurship Investment Research Project with Funding by Citi Foundation**

**Fort Pierre, South Dakota – May 17, 2011** – The South Dakota Indian Business Alliance (SDIBA) has formed a partnership with CFED, a national non-profit organization that works to create economic opportunity, to execute the Native Entrepreneurship Investment Research Project through a \$50,000 Neighborhood Revitalization Grant from Citi Foundation. The Native Entrepreneurship Investment Research Project will conduct an in-depth market analysis of the small business development environment on South Dakota's nine Indian reservations, and use the results to create an investment strategy with Native community development financial institutions (CDFIs) and tribal loan funds to address Native entrepreneur financing and capacity building needs.

“We are excited to be working with CFED, an organization that has an excellent track record for producing meaningful and impactful research in our field, on the Native Entrepreneurship Investment Research Project, and, of course, are truly grateful to the Citi Foundation for funding the project,” says Tanya Fiddler, Chair of SDIBA. The research that stems from this project will provide a foundation for SDIBA to best implement its strategic approach to Indian business development. Specifically, it will establish a steering committee to focus on designing the Native Entrepreneur Investment Program that will expand the capacity of Native CDFIs and other financing programs to fill the gaps that remain in mainstream business development services and financing products.

This announcement comes in tandem with the kick-off of the 2011 South Dakota Indian Business Conference, a bi-annual conference hosted by SDIBA that brings together government officials, federal program representatives, non-profit organizations, and Indian business professionals, to advance Indian business development in South Dakota. This year's conference, held May 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> in Rapid City, focuses on the theme, “Inspiring a New Native America.”

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**About the South Dakota Indian Business Alliance**

The South Dakota Indian Business Alliance (SDIBA) was formed in 2007 to cultivate effective and efficient business environments in South Dakota's Indian Country. In addition, SDIBA collaborates with partner organizations to maximize the benefits of joint efforts by the State and the Tribes to increase Indian entrepreneurship in South Dakota. SDIBA uses a comprehensive

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business development model that addresses Governance, Infrastructure, Finance, and Resources in order to develop sustainable businesses in Indian Country. The mission of SDIBA is to enhance Indian Business development by leveraging partnerships and resources of diverse institutions and organizations.