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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Lakota Federal Credit Union Increases Opportunity for Members Through Larger Loan Amounts**

*Kyle, South Dakota – March 13, 2014* – As 2013 was coming to a close, the Lakota Federal Credit Union’s Board of Directors approved an increase in their secured loan limit from \$5,000 to \$25,000 in a strategic move to promote asset-building opportunities for its 1,166 members. While its average loan size had been hovering at just under \$4,000, the Lakota Federal Credit Union is already seeing the impact resulting from this change. Beau LeBeaux recently financed his second vehicle, a pick-up truck, so that he could have reliable transportation to and from work during the winter months.

LeBeaux’s first vehicle, a sedan, was also financed through Lakota Federal Credit Union the day he opened his account in October 2013. “I really just went in to get direct deposit so I wouldn’t have to wait for my checks. I couldn’t believe it when I qualified for a vehicle loan,” says LeBeaux, whose credit score was one point over the requirement. While unreliable transportation is often times a barrier to steady employment for many residents of the Pine Ridge Reservation, this financing opportunity meant the difference between keeping a job or becoming unemployed for LeBeaux.

LeBeaux now frequents the Lakota Federal Credit Union the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month to make his loan payments, pay his utility bills, and utilize various other services. However, he had not always been a proponent of banking and didn’t even have a bank account when he first came to the credit union. His situation isn’t unique as 50% of households on the Pine Ridge Reservation are estimated to be either underbanked or unbanked.

“I had some bad experiences with banks in the past. I never understood all of the fees they were charging me, so I just stopped using them,” says LeBeaux. His experience at Lakota Federal Credit Union has been different, “They take the time to explain things to me. I have a relationship with them, and I’ll do everything to keep that relationship in good standing,” he adds.

The loan increase announcement came shortly after the Lakota Federal Credit Union celebrated its first anniversary in November 2013. At 2013 year-end the credit union had approved approximately 50 loans totaling over \$650,000 and had \$1.7 million in assets.

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### **About the Lakota Federal Credit Union**

In August of 2012, after a nearly four-year process, the Lakota Federal Credit Union received its charter from the National Credit Union Association and officially opened its doors in November 2012, becoming the only federally-insured financial institution located on the Pine Ridge Reservation. Even in its first day of operations, the Lakota Federal Credit Union made a big impact – opening 26 accounts and making one loan. Currently, the Lakota Federal Credit Union



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provides savings accounts, loan products, and various convenience services to those that live, work, worship, volunteer, or attend school on the Pine Ridge Reservation.

The Lakota Federal Credit Union's mission is to provide quality financial services conveniently located at home on the Pine Ridge Reservation, in a helpful, professional and respectful manner and to provide effective tools for its members, the Oglala Lakota people, to save, plan, and provide for their futures.