

Lakota Funds Creates Opportunities for Advancement by Partnering with Western Dakota Technical Institute



March 2, 2011

One of the more popular community outreach opportunities offered by Lakota Funds in the past year is a program that has been helping individuals obtain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL). Lakota Funds coordinates and pays for the trainings that are provided by Western Dakota Technical Institute. The CDL trainings are intended to help more tribal members obtain the skills necessary to apply for many higher paying jobs that require a CDL. A "Class B" CDL, for example, is required to drive all school busses for all schools programs located on the Pine Ridge Reservation and for Oglala Lakota Head Start programs. The trainings are also intended to give many CDL driver's who already have the "Class A" license the opportunity to advance in their career field, by obtaining a "Class B" license. Kateri Montileaux, Lakota Funds Success Coach and coordinator of the CDL project says, "The goal is to provide all the classes necessary for an interested individual to actually have a CDL at the end of this very short program. And then to secure a better job or better pay by having their CDL."

Patsy Schmidt, the Director of the CDL Program at WDTI, has already conducted two CDL meetings in November, one at the Pine Ridge College Center and the other at Lakota Trade Center with additional training programs scheduled:

The Driving Assessment- if you have previous CDL driving experience, this assessment will help determine 1) if you are ready to complete the skills test; or 2) if you need a Refresher Course; or 3) if you need the six week program.

The Refresher Course- If you already have previous CDL driving experience you will receive one-on-one refresher training with a Truck Driving Instructor.

CDL Seminar- Prepares drivers to take the SD written exam for Class A & B commercial vehicles.

Six Week Class A Program- Areas of instruction include: Basic road skills-highway and interstate, Yard exercises-backing and parking, Vehicle inspection, DOT regulations, Logbook training, heavy traffic operation, and Trip planning and map reading. This class will be held Monday-Friday, 7:30am -4:00pm for six weeks.

Prerequisites: Current valid driver's license, satisfactory driver operating record (no serious traffic violations, maximum of one speeding ticket in the last year), current DOT physical card from an authorized physician, negative drug test results from the Occupational Health Network, Inc.

Enrollment is limited to those participants who attended the initial informational meetings. Those participants are asked to pre-register for upcoming CDL training slots. Please call Kateri Montileaux at Lakota Funds 605-455-2500 for more information or to enroll for the class.

Lakota Funds serves tribal members with a business located on (or to be located on) the Pine Ridge Reservation. Loan types include: Micro-loans (under \$5000); Business Loans up to \$200,000, a Business

Line of Credit, and the Credit Builder Loan up to \$2500. Lakota Funds also provides one-on-one technical assistance as well as business classes including Financial Literacy and Empowerment Thru Business Ownership. If you have questions or want to register for a class call 605.455.2500, or email, tbrunsch@lakotafunds.org.

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