

# Funding Synchronicity

by Wendy White Eagle

Native Capital Investment, Inc., (Native Capital) was established in 2003 to develop self-sustaining businesses in American Indian communities throughout the United States. It is a full service, research-driven, investment organization that seeks to create fair trade business development. Current services include: business valuation analysis, mergers/acquisitions, creation of transparent financial reporting processes, and private equity investments.

Native Capital focuses on three sectors of market growth and expertise, which include: medical technology, alternative energy, and telecommunications. The organization invests for expansion and growth with established business models that have high internal growth rates, and large-market leadership potential. Native Capital maintains deep involvement with portfolio companies by helping companies achieve leadership positions in large markets.

There has been tremendous energy and progress in various economic development activities across Native America. There has been good progress on projects that various entrepreneurs have undertaken, harnessing those entrepreneurs' vision and imagination. As multiple sources of funding come together to promote economic development on native lands across the

country, local jobs are created, adding to the local tax base, among other economic benefits.

In essence, the goal of Native Capital is to leverage the strengths of various partners who help create successful projects – tribal, federal, state, and local governments along with various local nonprofit groups that work together to get businesses moving.

## Wisconsin's Menominee Nation promotes development

Half Sky Development, a real estate development firm located in Central Wisconsin, knows this level of collaboration firsthand. Their commercial project, approved within the Menominee Nation, broke ground in the fall and will house approximately 16,000 square feet of retail space. Eighty-five percent of the available space was leased out to local business owners before construction even began. These businesses – a meat market, coffee shop, hair salon, restaurant, billiard hall, and laundry – will provide needed products and services in the local market.

Partners in this project include the Northwood's NiiJii Enterprise Community, Inc. (NiiJii), a nonprofit that assisted in business plan development

for the various tenants, and the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, who worked with the private developers at Half Sky to arrange for a long-term land lease. The Menominee Community Resource Center was recently named one of the top ten service providers in the region. Employment assistance monies from the U.S. Department of Labor through the Workforce Investment Act Fund will provide employment options to local Tribal members as they obtain job experience. This program will offset wages for the new businesses. In addition, this project has attracted the attention of various lenders and may be able to garner lower cost financing options through the New Markets Tax Credit Program.

For details on how to have your organization participate in this information network, and/or participate in funding on upcoming projects, please contact Wendy White Eagle at (312) 492-8195, or via email at [Wendy@NativeCapital.com](mailto:Wendy@NativeCapital.com). For more information about the Half Sky Development, please contact Ann Marie Johnson at The Menominee Community Resource Center at (715) 799-4419, or via email at [Ajohnson@MITW.org](mailto:Ajohnson@MITW.org).