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"Opportunity NOW. It's a New Era" - Opportunity Finance Network to hold 24th Annual Conference; Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great* to Speak at Conference

WHAT: On Tuesday, December 9, 2008, Opportunity Finance Network- the leading network of private financial intermediaries delivering opportunities for low-wealth people and communities in the U.S. - will kick off their 24th conference for opportunity finance and CDFI professionals. The theme of the 2008 Opportunity Finance Network Conference is "Opportunity NOW. It's a new era."

"The 2008 Opportunity Finance Network Conference is designed to help our industry take stock of where we are and to prepare for the challenges and opportunities that are directly in front of us," said CEO & President of Opportunity Finance Network Mark Pinsky. "We are in the midst of a remarkable transformation in our nation, our world, and our industry. Our work and the role that the Opportunity Finance industry plays has never been more important for policy, for the economy, for financial markets, and – most important – for the people and places we serve."

WHEN: Tuesday, December 9, 2008 through Friday, December 12, 2008

WHERE: Hyatt Regency in Albuquerque, New Mexico

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS:

- *Good to Great* author Jim Collins is the key note speaker and will conduct a special three-hour interactive opening plenary session on Wednesday, December 10th. Collins was drawn to opportunity finance because of the industry's impressive accomplishments and potential, and plans to share his ideas on enduring great organizations -- how they grow, how they attain superior performance, and how good organizations can become great organizations.
- This year, Native CDFIs will be recognized and celebrated for their role in expanding the availability of opportunity finance to Native communities throughout the country.



- OFN's latest publication – *The NEXT American Opportunity: Good Policies for a Great America* – written by opportunity finance practitioners – provides newly elected officials and Capitol Hill policy makers with practical policy solutions that leverage the proven results of CDFIs for even greater impact right NOW.
- On Wednesday, December 10th, the six awardees of the second annual \$8.75 million Wachovia NEXT Awards for Opportunity Finance will be announced. The Wachovia NEXT Awards for Opportunity Finance are shining a bright light on the great successes of our industry and taking awardees to the next level of impact and accomplishment.
- OFN will present two special awards, the Congressional Champion Award to Senator Jack Reed for his pioneering contributions to affordable housing and economic development for underserved communities and individuals, and the Ned Gramlich Lifetime Achievement Award to a recipient to be announced at the Conference.

OFN expects up to 700 conference attendees, including: CDFI and Opportunity Finance institution staff, executives and board members; Native community development professionals and tribal leaders; investment managers; foundation program staff; bankers; CDFI consultants; policy advisors and policy makers; and community and economic development specialists. For more information about Opportunity NOW - OFN Conference 2008, visit:

www.opportunityfinance.net/conference

Registration: For a complete listing of sessions, presenters, and Conference events, and to register for the conference (beginning September 22nd), go to: www.opportunityfinance.net/conference. The conference registration fee is \$575 for Opportunity Finance Network members and \$725 for nonmembers. You can save \$25 if you register before November 3rd.

Press opportunities: The conference is **open to a limited number of journalists** who register in advance. Interested parties should contact Jeanine Plant at 212-245-0510 or jplant@pro-mediacomunications.com to arrange your press pass.

About Opportunity Finance Network: OFN is the leading network of private financial intermediaries that delivers both sound financial returns and real opportunities for low-wealth people and communities in the U.S. OFN Members originated more than \$12.5 billion in financing in non-conforming urban, rural, and native communities through 2006. This generated or maintained 175,710 jobs; 39,583 businesses; 533,394 housing units; and 5,858 community facility projects. More information is available at: www.opportunityfinance.net.

Conference sponsors include: Bank of America as the Platinum Sponsor; Capital One, Citibank, The Home Depot Foundation, and Wachovia as Gold Sponsors; HSBC, JP Morgan Chase, and Merrill Lynch as Silver Sponsors; Prudential, WAMU, and Wells Fargo as Bronze Sponsors. Community sponsors are: Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing and The Bank of New York Mellon. Community Leaders are: Enterprise Community Loan Fund and PNC Bank. The National co-host and Native Convening co-host is First Nations Oweesta Corporation. The local co-hosts include: ACCION New Mexico, Homewise, Inc., The Loan Fund, and New Mexico Community Capital.

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