

## SOUTH DAKOTA



### LAKOTA TECH HIGH SCHOOL

Pine Ridge, SD (2019)

The Oglala Lakota County School District (OLCS) has a vision for its students to be able to explore their Lakota culture while gaining academic knowledge, technical skills, and professional abilities. The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) is playing a key role in improving educational opportunities by helping the District and its students achieve those goals. The District encompasses 2000 sq. miles and serves 22 isolated communities with high poverty rates (over 50 percent in areas), MFI of 40 percent or less and severe unemployment and social challenges. The District serves 1700 students; 97 percent are Native. Currently, only 23 percent of 8th graders graduate from high school.

**THE NMTC FINANCES A FOURTH SCHOOL IN ONE OF THE MOST ECONOMICALLY DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES IN AMERICA**

To improve outcomes for students, the county constructed a new career and technical education (CTE) high school, the first of its kind in Indian Country. Students will not only learn academics but also technical and professional skills for greater employment options. The district expects to see increased graduation rates and improved job-readiness because of the CTE curriculum, and the surrounding community is also expected to benefit as the students graduate high school prepared to fill job openings within the immediate community.

The school district offers CTE training through its Academies for Freshman, Business, Engineering Tech, Industrial Arts, Medical Sciences, Public Safety and Security, and with plans for Restaurant Management, and Teacher Prep curriculum. Students explore Lakota culture while gaining the skills to succeed.

The school district confirms that, were it not for \$23.5 million in NMTC financing from Dakotas America and U.S. Bancorp Community Development Corporation, this project would not have proceeded as planned. The savings realized from below-market financing helped the district preserve capital for operations and future capital improvements.

The CTE school is the most recent of a longstanding relationship between the Oglala Lakota School District, GROW South Dakota and its subsidiary, Dakotas America. This is the fourth school financed with the credit. Altogether, the improvement and addition of these schools have increased the capacity for education across the Pine Ridge Reservation.

### FINANCING

**NMTC Financing:** Dakotas America, U.S. Bancorp Community Development Corporation: \$23.5 million  
**Equity Investor:** U.S. Bancorp Community Development Corporation

### IMPACT

- 100 direct, FTE construction jobs
- 50 new, permanent FTE jobs
- 300 - 400 students enrolled

### COMMUNITY

- Poverty rate: 44.2%
- Median Family Income: 44.2%
- Unemployment rate: 21.1%
- Located on Native Lands
- Non-metropolitan census tract

“Real progress is being made in Indian Country. I’m proud of these leaders and grateful I got to see the renovations firsthand.”

**Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-SD)**