

TWCC rolls out alternative to credit traps

WINNIPEG (March 10, 2011) - Tribal Wi-Chi-Way-Win Capital Corporation

(TWCC) is striving to keep Aboriginal people out of payday loan outlets and other credit traps embedded in First Nation communities by providing inexpensive credit alternatives across Canada.

"Aboriginal people typically get hit with inappropriately high interest rates or fees or terms and conditions that trap borrowers in an endless cycle," Brenda Zurba, Director of Sales and Marketing at the Winnipeg-based Aboriginal financial institution, said today.

"This has a negative impact on family, economic security, and drains assets out of the local economy. It is time someone in the Aboriginal community offered a way out."

TWCC announced it will offer employee benefit loans nationwide through its subsidiary, Aski Financial, and a network of distributors, the first of which is Tribal Resources Investment Corporation (Tricorp).

Employee benefit loans allow workers at participating employers to borrow at a rate far cheaper with more flexible terms than what would be available at a payday loan outlet. For example, an eligible employee could borrow \$1,000 at a borrowing cost of \$75 as opposed to \$300 at a payday loan outlet.

Such loans have been available in Manitoba through Aski, also based in Winnipeg, since 2006.

Under the new distributorship model, Tricorp, an Aboriginal financial institution based in Prince Rupert, B.C., will offer employee benefit loans to customers utilizing Aski's infrastructure.

Aski, which means "earth" in the Cree language, will act as the clearing house and financial administrator.

"We have looked upon TWCC as a model of what an Aboriginal financial institution can do in diversifying," said Peter Lantin, Chief Operating Officer at Tricorp. "We are delighted to be participating with them in an exciting new line of business."

Ms. Zurba said Aski distributorships are open to all Aboriginal financial institutions across the country, as well as compatible Aboriginal organizations.

"This is a very exciting and innovative private-sector Aboriginal solution to a longstanding social problem," Ms. Zurba said. "This is Aboriginal empowerment and anyone wanting to join us should contact me directly."

Ms. Zurba can be reached at 1-800-568-8488 or bzurba@twcww.mb.ca

There is no payroll cost in providing this attractive employee benefit because the employer is not providing any cash advance or acting as the actual lender. Loans can be disbursed directly to the employee or to a re-loadable Mastercard.

Ms. Zurba said benefits to the distributor include everything from being able to offer a new financial services product to clients, to diversifying and helping to better meet the needs of their customers. "It is business entry that will add value to the client as well as a revenue source to the distributor without the overhead," she added.

In addition, distributors are supported with strong loan management processes, administration and customer service by Aski. Training and marketing support are also provided as part of the offering. "It's win-win for everyone involved," Ms. Zurba said.

Founded in 1993, TWCC has provided more than \$40 million in loans for business in 45 First Nations communities in Manitoba. It was granted ISO 9001:2008 certification last year and was selected as one of Manitoba's 50 Fastest Growing Companies in 2009. www.twcc.mb.ca

Aski Financial, a wholly-owned subsidiary of TWCC, brings personal financial services directly to Aboriginal clients through employer partners - Aboriginal-owned and led businesses including First Nations bands, associations and organizations. www.askifinancial.ca