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STATE OF MONTANA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 16, 2015

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**Governor Bullock Announces Economic Development Funding for Northern
Cheyenne Tribe to Help Revitalize Essential Community Services**

HELENA – Governor Steve Bullock and Montana Department of Commerce Director Meg O'Leary announced the award of \$65,000 to the Northern Cheyenne Tribe for economic development efforts in Ashland. The funds are being made available to the Northern Cheyenne Development Corporation (NCDC) through the Indian Country Economic Development (ICED) Program.

"In smaller communities such as Ashland, Birney, and Lame Deer, every job counts," said Governor Bullock. "This grant will help the Northern Cheyenne Tribe revitalize an essential community business, putting people to work and growing the economy."

The Northern Cheyenne Tribe will use the grant funds to renovate and re-open the Cheyenne Depot II gas station and convenience store in Ashland. The NCDC plans to build off of the success that they've generated at the Cheyenne Depot I store located in Lame Deer by implementing a point-of-sale inventory management system, establishing a management team, and providing training to employees. Approximately 6 full-time and 4 part-time jobs will be created as a result of these efforts.

"This important program is a time-tested and proven economic development resource to help grow reservation economies," said Director Meg O'Leary. "With the Northern Cheyenne Development Corporation leading the way, this project will generate much needed jobs and increase commerce within the community."

Bob Vocu, CEO of the Northern Cheyenne Development Corporation, looks forward to the economic benefit that the re-opening of the Depot II will provide. "There are very few jobs available in our community," Vocu noted. "This grant allows us to create new jobs for members of the Cheyenne communities of Ashland and Birney, and provide a fair price for necessities."

The ICED Program awards a maximum of \$65,000 to the governing bodies of each of Montana's eight tribal governments per fiscal year. Since its inception in the 59th Montana State Legislature, the ICED Program has supported tribal government priority economic development projects, the Montana Indian Equity Fund, and the Montana Indian Entrepreneur Training Program.

In his executive budget proposal, Bullock has called for making funding of the ICED program permanent, so it can be a long-term, reliable source of economic development for Indian Country.

For more information about the ICED Program, contact Heather Sobrepena-George, Program Manager, at (406) 841-2775 or visit www.iced.mt.gov.

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