

Oglala Lakota Cultural & Economic Revitalization Initiative (OLCERI)

A small-scale, financially self-sustaining pilot initiative designed to restore self-sufficiency and self-determinism to the Oglala Lakota of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation

Summary

This is a plan to take an "A team" of skilled, dedicated individuals living on the Pine Ridge reservation, provide them with the tools to build their own locally-controlled, small community infra-structure as well with the mission and capacity to replicate their results elsewhere on the reservation.

The Initiative is specifically designed to ensure the community becomes economically self-reliant within 5 years of full funding.

The funding plan is written to allow as much financial transparency as possible with estimated budgets.

History & Conditions at Pine Ridge Reservation

From time immemorial, the Lakota people (generally known to non-natives as the "Sioux") relied on the buffalo as the primary source of food, clothing, shelter, and tools. The animal pervaded every aspect of life, essential not just to practical survival but cultural and spiritual survival as well.

In the 1870s, General William Sherman, observing this relationship, requested and obtained Presidential approval to exterminate the buffalo with the explicit aim of destroying the societies of the Plains Indian tribes. By 1882, the buffalo were all but extinct and the surviving Lakota were entirely dependent on the federal government for shelter, food, and clothing. Virtually all sacred and arable land was confiscated by the government and the Oglala Lakota (comprising several Lakota bands) were interned on the driest land in South Dakota where trees, water, and game are scarce. Laws including the prohibition against speaking Lakota and the forced removal of Reservation children to white schools contributed to the near-total destruction of their spirit, culture, language, and ability to support and protect itself.

Thus, within a space of a few years, all critical tribal infra-structure was demolished and largely remains that way today. With this loss came the breakdown in the social order that governed the culture for centuries which has left the population spiritually and morally adrift. Heavy dependency upon the federal government for basic survival continues to this day. Simply promoting the acceptable standards of conduct necessary for a healthy society, not to mention preserving the collective, cultural knowledge, requires Herculean efforts.

Over the years, there have been many attempts to improve conditions on the Reservation and return health and prosperity to The People. However, the extensive damage to the all major structures of the society (social, cultural, economic, and familial) limits the success of those efforts. Just as a plant requires nitrogen AND phosphorous AND potassium AND water AND air simultaneously, so does any society require its interrelated components (food production, education, fuel availability, shelter, transportation, mechanical construction and repair, etc.) to be initiated, available, and functioning at the same time. The absence of any vital ingredient usually destroys an entire recovery effort. Recovery efforts at Pine Ridge

have been trapped in a perpetual “Catch 22” because the societal and structural components necessary to support any systemic recovery have simply been unavailable.

Economic opportunity for the Oglala Lakota is virtually non-existent – 90% of the population is unemployed. The median family income hovers at \$3,700. The county in which the reservation lies (Shannon County) is noted as being the most impoverished in the country. Third-rate, government commodity food high in empty calories and sugar has deteriorated the population’s health and led to wide-spread diabetes and obesity.

The typical dwelling at Pine Ridge is a rundown, thinly insulated, moldy trailer home which roasts its occupants in the 110 degree summer heat and freezes them in the –30 degree winters (-70 with wind). Frequently there is no money for electricity or gas. Each year elders die from exposure in their own homes.

Cultural traditions and language wither in the face of these practical obstacles; as a people, they are barely surviving. Despite all that, the vitality and spirituality of the community lives on. And there are resources.

Skilled craftspeople, from expert mechanics to talented woodworkers, are abundant on the reservation. There are still ample stands of fast-growing construction-grade pine trees and other natural resources (ground water, diverse mineral deposits, and ample wind & sun for power generation). The people, knowledge, and land necessary to make a recovery are present.

(For further information on the severity of conditions, see appendix entitled “Pine Ridge Statistics”)

Past Failures to Raise the Standard of Living at Pine Ridge

There have been too many to list. But they reduce to three major reasons for failure:

1. Placing funds and power in the hands of people and groups who act for their own personal interests (most notably, the Pine Ridge tribal government). This is a fact universally acknowledged at Pine Ridge.
2. Incomplete planning: Failure to understand and plan for the extent of the work required to break the cycle of poverty and cultural decay.
3. Incomplete financing: Failure to establish internal self-sufficiency, forcing the reservation to continue to depend on hand-outs. This is the same phenomena as under-financing a start-up business in a difficult business environment, resulting in its almost inevitable failure.

As overwhelming as conditions at Pine Ridge may appear, the resolution is relatively easy to define and not especially difficult to implement – provided the program is well-sequenced, efficiently coordinated and well-managed.

Overview of Oglala Lakota Cultural & Economic Revitalization Initiative (OLCERI)

The OLCERI organization is incorporated in the state of South Dakota as a non-profit organization with tax-exempt status pending. It is currently operating under the fiscal agency of the Center for Sacred Studies (CSS), a 501(c)(3) corporation. CSS is also the sponsor of the Council of the 13 Indigenous Grandmothers of which two members are Oglala Lakota living on the Pine Ridge reservation.

OLCERI is a plan to bring commercial solvency and basic self-sufficiency to a specific, small community on the Lakota Pine Ridge reservation. Having accomplished this, its mission is then to act as the origin point to bring economic self-sufficiency to neighboring Lakota tiospaye (clan) -based communities. The projected long term outcome is a network of small, loosely associated, more or less economically autonomous communities that can fundamentally stand on their own feet and fend for themselves.

"Basic self-sufficiency" is defined here as the ability of a local community to provide to its members adequate shelter, water, energy, food, transportation, health, education and own culture. It is understood that in the modern world, a small community could not possibly be expected to manufacture all items it needs. However, it is expected that a self-sufficient community would be able to at least manufacture and repair its essential infrastructure. At the same time, it must be able to produce valuable goods or services that it can exchanged for goods and services it cannot produce for itself.

Self-Sufficiency means "able to provide for ones own needs without outside aid or support." However, embedded within our use of this word lies the idea of *sustainability*: The ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations (human and non-human) to meet their own needs.

For the sake of this initiative at the Pine Ridge Slim Buttes site, "essential infrastructure" is defined as including the following:

- Provide its own essential construction materials and be able to construct its own buildings
- Provide its own water resourcing and waste disposal
- Provide its own energy for transportation, heating, lighting and electrical needs
- Produce its own food year-round at least five times in excess of what it consumes.
- Repair its own vehicles and equipment
- Manufacture fabrics & textiles
- Immediate term, Health Care: Establish a local health-care support system which includes professional staff retention programs
- Long Term, Health Care: Sponsor post-secondary education for young people in the community to become professionals (including doctors, nurses, dentists, etc.)
- Immediate Term, Education: Support teacher retention efforts; OJT training for individuals in manufacturing and agricultural trades
- Long Term, Education: Professional training, expand Lakota language immersion program, expand gifted student program
- Help sponsor cultural events through donations and labor
- Provide transportation services to support flow of people, goods and services generated by the various OLCERI micro-industries

Phased plans exist for the roll-out of each infra-structure element, together with its supporting components. While some phases can overlap, the basic sequence is given below

(section entitled "Roll-Out Sequence"). Keep in mind that with each additional phase, new jobs and training programs are simultaneously being introduced. Also note that facilities will be efficiently organized for optimal energy & resource sharing.

(See appendix item entitled "*The Inescapable Logic of Local Community Self-Sufficiency*" for further information.)

Siting Criteria, Results & Justification

OLCERI's selected site is in the Slim Buttes area of the 5,000 sq mile Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, located in Shannon County, South Dakota.)

Criteria	Selection Results & Justification
Easy access to commonly used service road(s)	The land selected comprises about 40 acres and lies on the principle access corridor (Slim Butte Road) between Chadron, Nebraska and the Pine Ridge community of Oglala.
Central location to the area described	There are approximately 6,600 residents within a radius of 9 miles – a distance able to be traversed within 75 minutes on horseback, if necessary (worst-case scenario planning).
Land can be long-term leased or otherwise placed under the long-term authority of the managing non-profit organization.	The land is currently owned by Bryan Deans, a Lakota tribal member and the individual who has been selected to direct and manage OLCERI operations at this site. He will lease this land to OLCERI for a period of 25 years. There are no other encumbrances upon the property.
Land area available is sufficient for the scope of work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Including adequate buffers between industrial and light commercial /residential areas 	<p>The land area to be leased is adequate for all planned functions and activities save livestock pasturing. Arrangements can be made through the BIA to lease or buy some of the available 24,750 adjoining acres.</p> <p>The area is adequate for required buffering.</p>
Land available includes sufficient areas which are geo-physically and biologically suitable for light industrial, commercial and residential construction and use.	Area targeted for light industrial, commercial and residential construction/use is combination of current ranch encampment and pasture (former prairie). They are geo-physically and biologically suitable for these purposes (no proximate wetlands, sensitive habitats, etc.)
Land does not require substantial remediation before being usable for scope of work	No land remediation is deemed to be necessary

Achieving Self-Funding

OLCERI has retained the services of a competent grant writer (Angela Vogel) to assist with the raising of initial funds. However, it is our intention to become independent of external financing by developing internal profit centers.

To this end, an organization called "OLCERI COMMERCIAL SERVICES" is being incorporated in the State of South Dakota. This not-for-profit business will serve as an umbrella for various OLCERI revenue-producing activities – bio-fuels production, ranching, and local commercial trucking services.

It is by this means that OLCERI will fund the continuous development of other tiospaye sites on the Pine Ridge reservation without depending upon continuing outside support.

Directors & Principle Staff

THE OLCERI ORGANIZATION

BRYAN DEANS – CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Born on Pine Ridge, 1970, Oglala Lakota Tribal member

His father was a local rancher, An ancestor on his mother's side was an original signer of the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty. Bryan has been a successful rancher for 30 years.

Education: Trained by the US Army as a Army master machinist and heavy equipment engineer (7 years of service); has completed most of his Air Frame & Power Plant license requirements; has completed course work in chemistry.

Other Relevant Experience: Heavy Equipment Engineering instructor at West Point Military Academy (1 year); Was Director of the Oglala Sioux Tribal Farm & Ranch Division – responsible for overall management, including trained personnel on equipment use (3 years); Taught welding to students for state welding certification (5 years)

Rhea Mora – Computers, Bookkeeper, general admin; OLCERI Board Member

Mike Lawrence – Master Plumber; HVAC specialist; OLCERI Board Member

Robin Lawrence – Master Builder (taught construction, Oglala Lakota College); OLCERI Board Member

Brett Tsacher – Master Electrician & Wind Power specialist; Journeyman machinist

Bruce Renee – Master Heavy Equipment Mechanic, Master Machinist

Henry Red Cloud – Journeyman Solar Power & Heating Specialist

Larry Bauman – Master Carpenter, woodworker, cabinetry; Master herdsman

Lee Freeman – Computer systems specialist; graphic artist

OLCERI operates in cooperation with *Community Self-Sufficiency Initiative, Inc.*, which is registered in the State of California as a non-profit corporation (tax exemption being currently sought under IRS Codes section 501(c)(3).)

Founded in 2005, CSSI operates, as does OLCERI, under the fiscal agency of the Center for Sacred Studies (CSS), a 501(c)(3) corporation. (<http://www.sacredstudies.org/>)

THE CSSI ORGANIZATION

“The specific purpose of the CSSI corporation is to design, develop, establish, maintain, and instruct in the operation of small self-sustaining, self-replicating communities that bring stable economic development, cultural and environmental prosperity, and the creation of a distributed community safety net to small, self-identifying groups of indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in the United States and elsewhere in the World.” (excerpted from CSSI Articles of Incorporation, filed with the State of California in November 2005)

This organization responsible for establishing OLCERI and providing oversight project management & financial oversight , bringing in initial funding and external talents, providing legal services, organizing technology transfer, staffing, and mostly anything else needed to get and keep OLCERI operational.

ROBERT L RICH – FOUNDER OF COMMUNITY SELF-SUFFICIENCY INITIATIVE, INC. (CSSI)

Spent 8 years as a System Integration Engineer for the Boeing Corporation (1994-2002). His experience includes extensive project management, debug and problem solving for

aerospace engineering systems. During this time, he also was the technical facilitator for a project to integrate city, county and federal resources into a comprehensive, streamlined Welfare-to-Work system for the city of Long Beach.

After receiving his Permaculture certifications (Permaculture Drylands Institute, New Mexico, 2001; with additional training in agro-ecology from the Instituto de Permacultura da Bahia, Brazil, 2002), he spent a year in Brazil designing and managing projects to bring sustainable housing and working examples of Agro-Ecology to the reservation-bound Fulni-ô and Cóiwa-Guaraní peoples.

Bob is a principle force behind the OLCERI effort; he provides project planning, cashflow analyses, overall proposal writing and program guidance. He is also the only non-Lakota member of the OLCERI Board of Directors.

ANGELA VOGEL – DIRECTOR OF GRANTS & DEVELOPMENT, PROJECT CONTROLLER

Angela is an expert researcher, veteran grant writer and development expert. With 12 years experience in social welfare programs development, she has considerable experience with the intricacies of acquiring both private and federal funding. Angela is also a full-charge accountant by training and long experience. She acts as Controller for both CSSI and OLCERI.

TAMMI TAYLOR – DIRECTOR OF MARKETING, FUNDRAISING

Tammi began fundraising and cause marketing at a very young age and has raised over a million dollars for various causes. She has worked with many non-profit organizations, planning and executing fundraising events, directing their public relations and their marketing, throughout her career including: The American Diabetes Association, The Arthritis Foundation, Tri-County Association for the Blind, The Cancer Society and Toys for Tots.

Focus & Organizational Structure of OLCERI

OLCERI has three basic missions; together they will make it stand stable as a tripod. Listed generally in sequence of implementation, they are:

1. Commercial: To provide its own continuing funding
2. Internal: To establish itself with its own infra-structure and internal capacity for self-sustenance.
3. External: To establish copies of itself elsewhere on the reservation, operated by other family groups.

These missions are expressed in the organizational divisions of OLCERI:

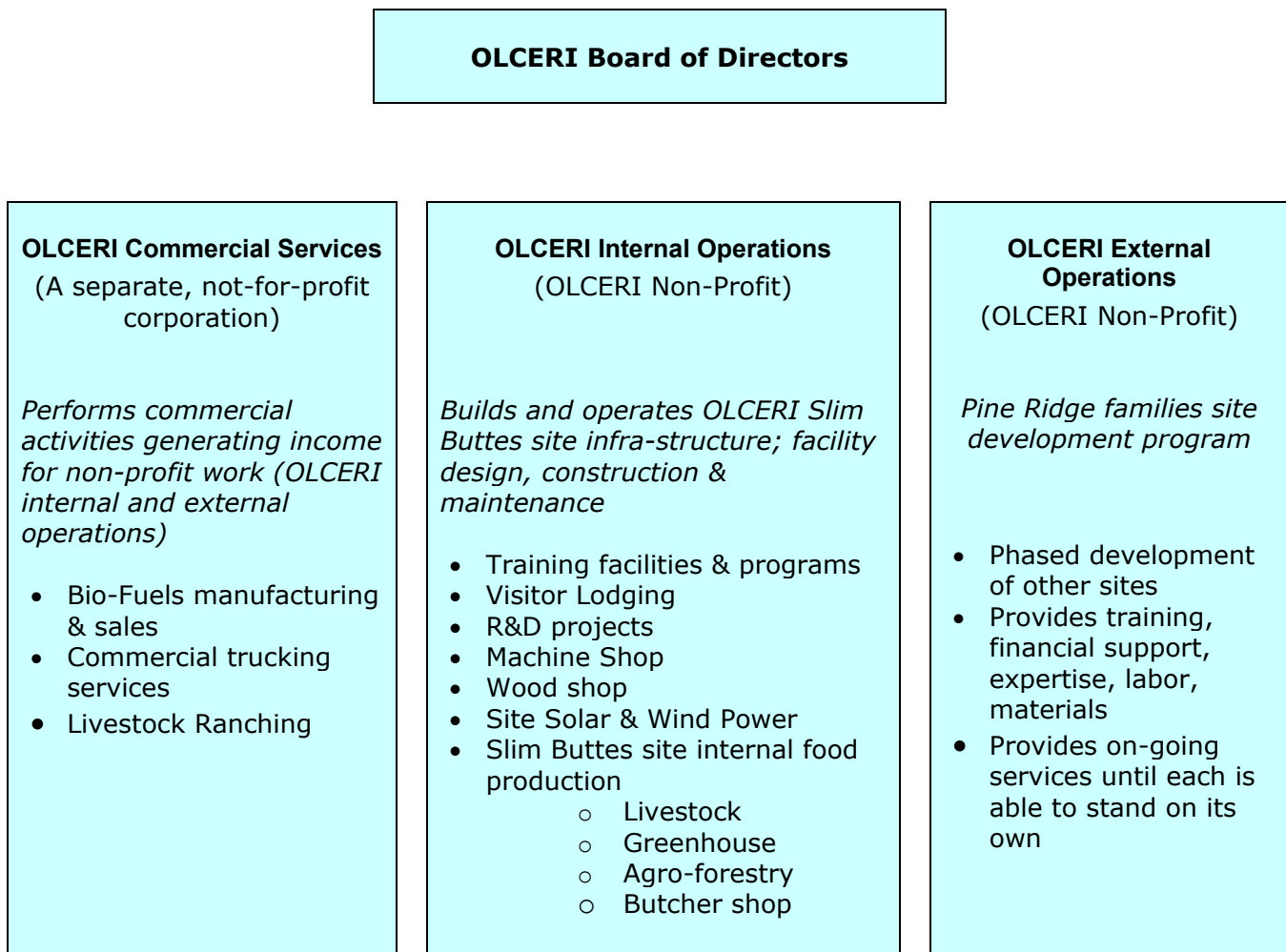


Figure 1: Basic Organizational Structure of OLCERI

Note: Facilities shared by all three divisions (tool shops, some vehicles, some equipment, etc.) are operated by the Internal Division.

Roll-Out Sequence

This organization of functions also clarifies the sequences required to bring about the intended results. For example:

- Because the distances are so great between destinations on the Pine Ridge reservation and between Pine Ridge and other cities in the US, it is necessary to have on-site a visitors / workers lodging facility.
- Office space is needed for OLCERI operations.
- Setting up and running bio-fuels and livestock programs will require various internal shops to support these operations including machine, welding, and vehicle maintenance shops.
- Developing a greenhouse/food production facility that operates year-round and can be replicated at other community sites will require a wood shop (framing lumber milling, doors & windows manufacturing), general construction equipment and equipment storage & maintenance shop.
- As an intersection of the livestock and food production programs, a butchering shop would be an obvious outcome.
- The existence of the above shops suggests the need for local power generation (solar, wind) and maintenance.
- Robust internal production capabilities must be achieved in order to undertake the task of establishing similar sites elsewhere around Pine Ridge.

Spread across OLCERI’s organizational chart, the general sequence of the initial tasks appears so:

Ideal Sequence of Implementation	Commercial Services	Internal Operations	External Operations
1		OLCERI Lodge (Visitor & worker lodging facilities; OLCERI offices)	
2	Assemble donated 15,000 sq ft industrial building		
3	Complete Bio-Fuels Plant – Phase 1		
4		Youth Education Livestock Program	Youth Small Business Training Program

Ideal Sequence of Implementation	Commercial Services	Internal Operations	External Operations
5	Oil-Seed Production – requiring contracts with local farmers, provide them seeds	Obtain equipment for & install machine, vehicle maintenance & welding shop	
6	Obtain trucking equipment needed to ship fuel product	Obtain Vehicles & Construction Equipment (backhoe, loader, semi, bobcat, trailers, 6 pickups)	
7	Commercial Livestock Production		
8		Prototype extended family homestead/ greenhouse development & construction (includes fruits, vegetables, poultry, aquaculture)	
9		Obtain and install wind & solar electric power equipment (to meet site shops demands)	
10		Sawmill / Wood Shop	
11		Obtain well-drilling equipment	
12			Begin continuous family site development program; site design, funding & construction
13		Woodlot and Food Forestry Development (20 acres, OLCERI site)	

Ideal Sequence of Implementation	Commercial Services	Internal Operations	External Operations
14		Fabric & textile cultivation & manufacturing (flax, wool, leather, pelts)	
15		Brick & ceramics manufacturing	
16		Full OLCERI Site Solar & Wind Power Generation	
17		Glass-making	

Assets and Resources Already Committed

As of April 2006, the following physical assets and funds have already been committed to OLCERI by donors, sponsors and staff who are pooling their personal resources:

- The Lakota Fund (Kyle, SD, <http://www.lakotafund.org/>) has granted OLCERI a low-interest business loan for booting up bio-fuels manufacturing operations. \$ 200,000
- A disassembled 16,000 square foot steel industrial building has been granted to OLCERI by a private source in Denver, CO. Estimated value of structure: \$ 165,000
- Machine & Heavy Equipment Repair Shop tools (Bruce Renee) \$150,000
- Machine & Heavy Equipment Repair Shop tools (Bryan Deans) \$40,000
- Fully operational bio-diesel reactor, 900 gal/day, completed in 2005 and donated to OLCERI by Bryan Deans. Estimated value: \$ 20,000
- OLCERI Lodge; professional architectural design, drawings and materials list donated by a private party in Los Angeles, CA \$ 2,500
- OLCERI Lodge; commitment for on-site construction management, technical consulting and supervision; 1 week by 2 technical personnel. Donated by the National Strawbale Association. Estimated value: \$ 3,000
- 40 acre ranch site \$ 16,000
- Full operation ranch equipment (Bryan Deans) \$ 300,000
- 5 nearly-rebuilt windmill heads (power generation) \$ 40,000
- 3 tractor trailers (50,000 lbs capacity) \$ 300,000
- Partially built 3,700 sq ft pole barn-construction ranch/general purpose building \$48,000
- Modular office building, 24' x 60' (valued at approx \$30/sf) \$43,200

Total Value of Assets Committed to Date	\$1,327,700
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Summary of Funding Obtained and Still Sought by Project

Seq No.	Project	Notes	Estimated Budget	Funding obtained to date	Funding sought
1	OLCERI lodge	Office space + lodging for 10 workers or visitors	\$138,000	\$5,500	\$132,500
2	Industrial facilities building	15,000 sq ft steel structure	\$316,600	\$150,000	\$166,600
3	Bio-diesel and ethanol production	Phase 1: 500,000 gal/year	\$220,000	\$220,000	\$ 0
4	Youth Education Livestock Program / Youth Small Business Training Program	Small herd to provide continuing funding to Youth Business Training Program	\$60,000	\$40,000	\$20,000
5	Welding & Machine shop	Supports all projects and activities	\$560,432	\$238,000	\$322,432
6	Oil-Seed Production w/ local farmers	Seed	\$xxx		\$xxx
7	Vehicles & Construction Equipment	Backhoe, loader, bobcat, specialized trailers, 6 pickups	\$370,000	\$ 0	\$370,000
8	Commercial Trucking	Various configs of rigs to accommodate cargos + startup maintenance budget	\$631,000	\$300,000	\$331,000
9	Livestock Production	Larger herd to provide OLCERI with continuing meat + other Lakota families with seed herd	\$578,000	\$300,000	\$278,000

Seq No.	Project	Notes	Estimated Budget	Funding obtained to date	Funding sought
10	Prototype extended family homestead/ greenhouse	Development & construction (includes fruits, vegetables, poultry, aquaculture). Follow-on copies approx \$85,000	\$547,000	\$ 0	\$547,000
11	Wind & solar electric equipment	Minimum needed for internal OLCERI shops	\$120,000	\$ 40,000	\$80,000
12	Wood Shop	Sawmill & equipment to produce framing-grade lumber, doors, windows	\$34,000	\$ 0	\$34,000
13	Well-drilling equipment	Primarily used for establishing new external family sites	\$200,000	\$ 0	\$200,000
14	Continuous Family Site Development Program	Site design, funding & construction	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
15	Woodlot and Food Forestry Development (20 acres)	On OLCERI site	\$117,000	\$ 0	\$117,000
16	Fabric & Textile Manufacturing (wool, leather, pelts)	(Under research)	---	---	---

Seq No.	Project	Notes	Estimated Budget	Funding obtained to date	Funding sought
17	Brick & Ceramic mfg	Also includes manufacturing porous ceramic irrigation pipe.	To be determined	---	---
18	Full OLCERI Site Solar & Wind Power Generation	(under research)	\$1,200,000	\$ 0	\$1,200,000
19	Glass-making	(under research)	To be determined	---	---
TOTALS			\$4,494,032	\$1,293,500	\$3,798,532

OLCERI External Operations

At the completion of infra-structure construction (step 11), OLCERI would then focus on the deployment or dissemination of this pattern elsewhere on the reservation (step 12). This would be accomplished by continuously running workshops and thereby generating interest on the part of individuals who are part of self-identifying groups (tiospayes). These people would train in OLCERI facilities and, together with OLCERI staff, would plan out the design of their own tiospaye sites.

The Slim Buttes OLCERI site would provide services to tiospaye sites that themselves could not perform in their early stages (such as bio-fuel production, well-drilling, vehicle & equipment servicing, feedlot services) – services that would otherwise be outsourced off the reservation. It is this inability to keep dollars recycling within Pine Ridge that forces the reservation into eternally poverty. And it is precisely this problem that the OLCERI plan is designed to address.

Having just one site that keeps dollars within the Rez would be a huge boon to the Pine Ridge economy. However, OLCERI’s mission is to continue deploying and evolving tiospaye sites, gradually building local community capacity, production and diversity of services across the reservation.

At the same time, since this is a tiospaye-based initiative, it can avoid all the usual corruption pitfalls inevitable when the IRA government gets involved. In this design, resources and accountability is always held at the tiospaye level, which acts as a buffer against centralizing and hoarding. If the leader of a tiospaye site acts improperly with its resources, it will only generate ill-will for itself and not seriously impact the overall network of Lakota tiospayes.

Once the tiospaye site development program is underway, additional capacities will be developed at OLCERI to continue the movement towards regional self-sufficiency. This will include manufacturing of glass (for greenhouses, which are essential for fresh foods year round) and ceramics (pottery, pipes, bricks).