

February 28, 2008  
For Immediate Release

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**Oklahoma Bank Partners with Haitian Microfinance Institution to Fight Poverty**

Fonkoze, Haiti's largest micro-finance institution, and Central National Bank of Enid, Oklahoma, have partnered to create a low-cost stored-value card that offers Haitian Diaspora and others in the U.S. both a convenient way to manage their own finances and an inexpensive way to increase income and investment in Haiti through remittances.

The two organizations recently signed an agreement under which CNB will issue a prepaid card for Fonkoze. Interactive Transaction Services, a wholly-owned subsidiary of CNB, will process the cards. Value can be stored on the cards in three ways: through direct payroll deposit, at participating banks, and through other load networks. The cards will have all the features of CNB's current prepaid card portfolio, but will also allow holders to send remittances up to \$2,500 per day to Haiti for only \$6 and make long distance phone calls at a competitive rate. Alianza International, a prepaid debit card and money transfer enabling company, will provide consumer marketing and remittance delivery support for CNB and Fonkoze. The product will be available on the market March 21, 2008.

"Fonkoze has been very successful in proving that economic change in Haiti is possible," said Brud Baker, president and CEO of CNB. "The flow of money to Haiti is directly related to effective remittance channels, and we feel strongly that we can be a positive influence towards eliminating the extreme poverty that exists in that country by utilizing prepaid cards to make remittances cheap and reliable."

Haitians living abroad, a diaspora 1.5 million strong, sent more than \$1.65 billion to their country in 2006. Most of that diaspora is concentrated in the United States, totaling 850,000 to 1 million people. 1.1 million adults in Haiti receive remittances, typically 10 times per year at an average of \$150 per remittance.

"We're excited about the new Fonkoze-CNB card," said Fonkoze Executive Director Anne Hastings, "because it is one more way to make affordable financial services available to our clients even as it offers us a way to begin reaching out to their families and friends in the United States."

Fonkoze's mission is to provide tools that help Haiti's poor work their way out of poverty. They work to accomplish that through their 33 branches, located all over the

country, by offering financial services to both borrowers and savers. Fonkoze has worked directly with 150,000 individuals and facilitated \$40 million in remittances in the last six years. The organization also offers micro-insurance, literacy, and other education services.

“We believe the structure of this program and economic benefit to the Haitian people is a sound model that microfinance institutions worldwide will follow,” said Randy Gutierrez, president of Alianza. “The simplicity of the prepaid card and remittance process coupled with low pricing and fee transparency will assist with rapid consumer adoption of the Fonkoze program.”

#### **About Central National Bank & ITS**

*Central National Bank, an FDIC-insured institution, is headquartered in Oklahoma, and is held by Central Services Corporation. There are seven locations throughout that state. The bank reported assets of over \$437 million in 2006. Since 2000, CNB has been issuing and processing prepaid cards, with ITS, a subsidiary of CNB, and provides standard and custom card programs for employers, universities, financial institutions and other organizations. For more information about any of the Bank’s products, contact Tania Warnock at [twarnock@cnb-enid.com](mailto:twarnock@cnb-enid.com) or by phone at 580.213-1762. For more information about ITS, visit the ITS website at [www.itsvcs.com](http://www.itsvcs.com).*

#### **About Fonkoze**

*Fonkoze is an internationally recognized leader in the field of microfinance, known for its comprehensive approach to poverty alleviation and for innovation. Fonkoze's mission is to build the economic foundations for democracy in Haiti. Established in 1994, Fonkoze currently has over 120,000 depositors and over 50,000 active borrowers, 99% of whom are women. In 2005, the Grameen Foundation awarded Fonkoze its Pioneer in Microfinance Award in recognition of the institution’s ability to break new ground in poverty alleviation while operating in one of the most challenging environments in the world. For more information, contact Anne Hastings at [director@fonkoze.org](mailto:director@fonkoze.org) or by phone at 1-800-293-0308 or visit the Fonkoze website at [www.fonkoze.org](http://www.fonkoze.org).*

#### **About Alianza International**

*Alianza International is headquartered in the San Francisco bay area and is privately held. Alianza International provides international money transfer enabling and prepaid debit card enabling services to financial institutions credit unions, nonprofit organizations, businesses and microfinance institutions globally through partnerships with banks and licensed money transmitters. For more information contact Blas Romero at [blas.romero@alianzaintl.com](mailto:blas.romero@alianzaintl.com) or by phone at 310-270-5983.*

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