



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**COMMUNITY FIRST FUND'S NEW RATING ON FINANCIAL STRENGTH
AND IMPACT PERFORMANCE PROVIDES INVESTORS
WITH INCREASED TRANSPARENCY**

***CARS™ Rating Provides Standards, Rigor, and Transparency for CDFI Investments That
Benefit Low-Wealth and Low-Income Markets***

(Lancaster, PA) -- Community First Fund, a community development financial institution (CDFI) located in south central PA has been rated by the CDFI Assessment and Ratings Service (CARS™). Investors that subscribe to CARS™ receive detailed analyses that assess the financial strength and performance and impact performance for each CDFI rated, augmenting the underwriting and monitoring of their investment in Community First Fund.

Community First Fund is one of seven CDFIs from across the country rated by CARS™ in the first quarter of 2009. According to Opportunity Finance Network (OFN), that is nearly double the number of CDFIs rated compared to the same period last year, and brings the total number rated to 46.

“The continued growth in the number of CARS™ Ratings shows that the opportunity finance industry is committed to transparency and rigorous standards,” says Paige Chapel, Executive Vice President of CARS™. “The ratings provide a win-win both for investors who subscribe to the service and the CDFIs who elect to participate. Through their participation in CARS™, Community First Fund is clearly demonstrating leadership in accountability and transparency,” she adds.

“The CARS™ rating benefits Community First Fund in many ways,” said Daniel Betancourt President and CEO. “We have gained new insights into how we are viewed by investors, and we have a better understanding of what investors are looking for as they consider investments in the CDFI field,” he added. “While Community First Fund has always held itself to the highest standards, the rigorous process of undergoing a CARS™ analysis has enhanced our operating standards even further,” Betancourt continued.

The CARS™ Ratings measure CDFIs in two areas. An impact performance rating assesses how well a CDFI can demonstrate that it is creating the benefits it promises for low-income and low-wealth people and communities, while the financial strength and performance rating uses a CAMEL (Capital, Assets, Management, Earnings, Liquidity) analysis to assess the CDFI's overall creditworthiness based on an analysis of past financial performance, current financial strength, and apparent risk factors.

“Investors use CARS™ to evaluate and monitor investment opportunities among CDFIs,” said Mark Pinsky, Chairman of the CARS™ Board and President and CEO of Philadelphia-based Opportunity Finance Network. “If investors are wondering how a CDFI is handling the challenges of the current economy, CARS™ provides an objective, third party analysis of what the management team of a CDFI is doing to address risk.”

“Participation in CARST™ provides us with a valuable marketing tool. Now when we approach current and new investors and funders, we can demonstrate our commitment to transparency and rigorous performance standards,” says Betancourt

Investors who use CARST™ have indicated that the number and breadth of CDFIs rated makes it easier to compare CDFI performance based on a standard set of metrics when evaluating investment opportunities or monitoring a portfolio.

In addition to Community First Fund the six other CDFIs rated in the first quarter of 2009 are:

- Community Redevelopment Loan and Investment Fund (Atlanta, GA)
- Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises, Inc or FAHE (Berea, KY)
- National Development Council, Grow America Fund (New York, NY)
- Northern California Community Loan Fund (San Francisco, CA)
- Rural Community Assistance Corporation (West Sacramento, CA)
- Village Capital Corporation (Cleveland, OH)

The CARST™ service aims to achieve 100 ratings by the end of 2011. CDFIs elect to participate in the ratings program. Current CARST™ subscribers include national and regional banks, foundations, and socially responsible investors.

About CARST™

CARST™, the CDFI Assessment and Ratings System, is an independent project of Opportunity Finance Network. Launched in 2004 to promote performance as a primary criterion determining the flow of capital through CDFIs and to promote standardization of information and industry-wide performance standards, CARST™ is the only ratings system of its kind. Ratings include an assessment of impact performance and financial strength and performance. Ratings are based on five years of historical performance and cover a projected three-year period with annual updates in subsequent years. CARST™ publishes a list of CDFIs who are scheduled for an upcoming rating, and also provides an on-demand CDFI rating service for investors. More information about CARST™ is available at www.opportunityfinance.net/cars.

About Community First Fund

Community First Fund is a non-profit loan fund that works with new and existing business, community organizations, and commercial real estate and affordable housing developers who are investing in and revitalizing the small cities and surrounding areas that they serve. Community First Fund serves 13 counties through five offices and in its 16 years of existence, has disbursed more than 780 loans totaling more than \$28 million

About Opportunity Finance Network

Opportunity Finance Network (OFN), the leading national network of more than 160 private financial institutions, creates growth that is good for communities, investors, individuals, and the economy. Members of OFN are community development financial institutions (CDFIs) who deliver responsible lending to help low-wealth and low-income communities join the economic mainstream. To date, the opportunity finance industry has financed more than \$25 billion in underserved markets in all 50 states, yielding more than 200,000 jobs, 500,000 housing units, and 5,000 community facility projects. More information is available at: www.opportunityfinance.net.

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