By Jan Rahn
Managing Editor

“The answer to a prayer” is how John Potts describes why he is giving his Best of Show carving to Kyle, S.D. to be on display at the Oglala Lakota College.

Potts won Best of Show during the North Platte Woodcarvers show June 11-12 for his piece he calls “Worm” made of walnut.

The Sioux name he gave his carving is “Waglula Iglukuya Okiziya.”

Waglula means worm, the name Iglukuya means to be humble, and the word Okiziya means to cause to make well.

“I just shortened it to “Worm,” said Potts, who has been carving for approximately eight years.

Potts said the “answer to prayer” came about while reading a book on Crazy Horse—he ended up saying a prayer asking for a way to help the Oglala Lakota.

The very next day—which he emphasized again—the very next day while getting his mail, a brochure of the Oglala Lakota College was the item on top.

“I figured that was the answer!” said Potts. “It blew my mind. I get chills every time I think about it.”

He took the carving to South Dakota over the weekend.

Information from a brochure describes why the college needs support.

The 35-year-old college within the Pine Ridge Reservation has been overlooked or forgotten by the federal government.

Nearly half of the college students come from families living below the poverty level.

Over 70 percent of the college’s students are single parents, with 100 percent of these students requiring financial assistance of some type to stay in school.

At least 75 percent of all students in college meet low income guidelines.

Nearly 92 percent of all Oglala Lakota College students are the first generation to attend college.

Nearly 40 percent of the entering college freshmen need some form of remediation; 25 percent need extensive remediation.

Sixty-one percent of the Oglala who complete eighth grade never graduate from high school.