

# Press Release

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: David A. Kahley  
President & CEO  
The Progress Fund  
(724) 529-0384  
dkahley@progressfund.org

Melissa Jacobs  
Innkeeper  
The Jean Bonnet Tavern  
(814) 623-2250  
jbonnet@pennswoods.net

### **The Jean Bonnet Tavern Toasts the Future**

*The Progress Fund helps this storied inn build on a history of success.*

**Bedford, PA – January 11, 2006** - Join us on Friday, January 13, 2006 at 3:00 PM as we celebrate the ribbon cutting and grand reopening of the Jean Bonnet Tavern.

Congressman Bill Shuster and Carrie Fischer, from Pennsylvania's Tourism Office, will be among the key officials speaking at the event. Amy Mearkle, co-anchor for 10 News this morning and 10 News at Noon, WTAJ-TV, will emcee the event.

Melissa and her husband Shannon own The Jean Bonnet Tavern, a Bedford County landmark since before the Revolutionary War. Today, thanks to the third loan from The Progress Fund since 1999, when the Jacobs became the Tavern's innkeepers, the grounds of the elegant structure will be enhanced by the addition of surrounding lands, placement of a Revolutionary War cabin on the grounds that will serve as an entryway/gift shop, and renovations that will make the tavern both more beautiful and efficient.

"Pennsylvania has such a rich history," Melissa says. "I think it has the *best* colonial history of all the states. In Bedford County, it's different than going to Philadelphia. They were urban, even in Colonial days. We were frontier, with a 240-year history of welcoming travelers."

The Jean Bonnet Tavern was built in 1762 and is listed on the National Registry of Historical Places. Throughout the years it has hosted farmers preparing for the local Whiskey Rebellion as well as troops sent by George Washington to stop them.

The Tavern benefits from Shannon Jacobs' dozen years of experience with Hoss's Steak and Seafood. Guests enjoy an early American dining room within original fieldstone walls, surrounded by large fireplaces and chestnut beams. Its menu, which can also be enjoyed on the Tavern's porch, includes a wide variety of dishes, from steaks and seafood

(including crab cakes) to sandwiches and salads. The Tavern's desserts and breads are baked right there on the premises. The Tavern also now caters everything from corporate events to private parties.

The Tavern itself has live entertainment. It also has 16 draft beers on tap, from Yard's Love Stout and Troeg's Mad Elf to Weyerbacher Prophecy Ale. Membership in the popular Jean Bonnet Tavern Mug Club includes a complimentary mug of each new draft beer the inn offers, plus an Annual Muggers Party, food and beer deals and weekly giveaways.

According to folklore, the place is also haunted. But it's no myth that it's also been successful for the Jacobs. The Jean Bonnet Tavern includes a bed and breakfast whose four rooms, with hand-hewn floors and high ceilings, are filled with antiques.

The Progress Fund financed a portion of the Jacobs' original Tavern purchase and refinanced it in 2004. The Tavern's sales have tripled since 1999. In 2006, The Progress Fund loan is providing \$150,000 – along with a \$150,000 loan from Pennsylvania's First Industries Fund Tourism program – allowing the Jacobs to make several improvements to their business.

First, they have purchased a Revolutionary War-era log cabin from a neighboring county and transported it to Tavern grounds, where it will be reconstructed to serve as the business's entryway and gift shop.

"The people do have such a strong emotional connection when they visit here," says Melissa. "They want to take something with them." She plans to primarily offer items with the Jean Bonnet Tavern logo, but also pewter dishes and mugs manufactured with Pewtarex lead-free pewter made in York, PA, as well as items made by local artisans.

The renovation of the Tavern area will make the facility "more efficient for our employees and more comfortable for our patrons," Melissa explains. Changes include new bar-back crafted from wormy oak high-back booths, a wide-plank hardwood floor -- all true to period – and two wide screen TV's added to the bar area. The restaurant has also become a non-smoking facility. "This is such a beautiful building," Melissa says.

Finally, The Progress Fund is helping Melissa and Shannon Jacobs purchase the coal yard next door to their property. Although the innkeepers still plan to offer coal for sale there, Melissa explains that its purchase will protect their setting, and possibly allow them to use it for future expansion.

“We’re going to be hiring three to five additional people,” she adds: “gift shop employees, an employee for the coal yard, and additional servers in the Tavern, because we’ll be more popular than ever.”

The Jacobs’ dream for the Tavern back in 1999 wasn’t taken seriously by many others. “We were turned down by everybody. The Progress Fund made our purchase possible,” says Melissa.

Today, she says, “Banks were competing for our business. We’ve chosen to stay with The Progress Fund because they’ve been so fantastic.”

“They’ve done great with it,” says Commercial Loan Officer Jim Gonsman. “They’re very attentive to detail and preserving the history of the building.” And very attentive to the organization that has helped them so much.

“Melissa’s a big advocate of The Progress Fund,” Jim notes. “She’s always sending people to us.” And people are always recognizing her worth: She has been honored for her business leadership by the Saint Francis Small Business Development Center, Pennsylvania Business Central, and Governor Ed Rendell.

For more information on The Jean Bonnet Tavern, call (814) 623-2250. For further information on The Progress Fund, call (724) 529-0384, or visit [www.progressfund.org](http://www.progressfund.org).

The Progress Fund is a vigorous non-profit loan fund that creates jobs and improves communities by providing entrepreneurial coaching and capital to small businesses in the travel & tourism industry. The Progress Fund serves 39 counties in Pennsylvania, the entire state of West Virginia, and Appalachian Ohio. The Progress Fund was founded in 1997, and has loaned more than \$12 million to 118 enterprises, creating or preserving more than 986 jobs. The Progress Fund is an Equal Opportunity Lender. Discrimination is prohibited by Federal Law. Complaints of discrimination may be filed with the Secretary of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250.