

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: David A. Kahley
President & CEO, The Progress Fund
814-696-9380
dkahley@progressfund.org
Kevin Miscik, Owner
Lapels A Fine Men's Clothier
724-853-7145

Menswear Express Gets New Owner, New Name – But Keeps Great Service The Progress Fund helps long-time manager become owner

Dawson, PA – 12/31/2002 – Kevin Miscik entered the men's clothing business at age 18, and knew he'd found his calling. "I'm a retailer from the beginning," says Miscik, now 34. "It's kind of in my blood."

This week, customers of Menswear Express on Pennsylvania Avenue in Greensburg may find their pulses quickening as Miscik takes ownership of the three-year-old clothier, and begins transforming it into Lapels A Fine Men's Clothier. But Miscik, who has been part of the management team at Menswear Express since its inception, says he won't change the recipe that has made the store a profitable success story and a fixture in the community. "I am going to continue to provide exceptional customer service," he says. "You come in here, I'll know your name, I'll know what size you wear and what you like. I'm going to make shopping easy for you."

When Menswear Express opened in 1999, it generated intense interest in Westmoreland County, because clothiers in mid-size towns have become an endangered species. But along with original owner Bruce Berk, Miscik made the store a community fixture by supporting efforts like the Bethlehem Project for the economically disadvantaged, and the Westmoreland County Symphony.

A veteran of Richman Brothers, The Bon Ton, and J.C. Penney, Miscik also helped make Menswear Express a profitable enterprise. When Berk decided to focus on his North Huntingdon store, Berk's Menswear, he looked for a way to sell the Greensburg location to Miscik. "Kevin is an inspiration," explains Berk. "He's a good motivator. He's excited about everything we do. That's a rare breed these days."

The only problem was financing. Most banks "were just not interested in looking at small, retail stores," Miscik says. Despite a business plan honed at the St. Vincent College Small Business Development Center, he was unable to get a bank to lend the full purchase price.

Enter The Progress Fund. The nonprofit fund agreed to provide 50% of the project, which, along with a loan from Dollar Bank, allowed Miscik to buy the store. "I really needed The Progress Fund's help," Miscik says.

"I'm impressed with how committed they are to Greensburg and to Kevin," says Berk.

The Progress Fund has assisted two other businesses on Pennsylvania Avenue: Delisi & Associates and Derby's Restaurant. Along with Lapels, those businesses are "leading the charge to develop a cohesive group of downtown merchants," says Thomas Jachimowitz, executive director of the Greensburg Community Development Corp.

"Bruce and The Progress Fund are giving me an opportunity to own my own business," says Miscik, "which I've always wanted to do."

The Progress Fund is a nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution that provides expertise and funding to businesses in rural southwestern and central Pennsylvania, and northern West Virginia. An outgrowth of Congressman John P. Murtha's efforts, The Progress Fund has helped preserve or retain 600 jobs since 1997. 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.

Lapels A Fine Men's Clothier is located at 106 South Pennsylvania Avenue in Greensburg.

####