

Project Profile

Location:
17245 Bootjack Road
Ridgway, PA

County:
Elk

Description:
Business
Development
Loan

Total Project Cost:
\$205,000



Appalachian Arts Studio and Museum



People:

What's hot enough to draw 30,000 visitors to far northern Pennsylvania in mid-February? The answer, since 1998, has been the Ridgway Chainsaw Carvers Rendezvous, the largest non-competition chainsaw-carving event in the world. Founders Rick and Liz Boni decided to turn the log-to-art phenomenon into a year-long draw by launching the Appalachian Arts Studio and Museum.

Progress:

The Boni's faced the problem many tourism entrepreneurs do: "A local bank was not willing to give us the loan we needed," says Liz. A team helped the Boni's put together a business plan and secure \$185,000 in financing. It included Pennsylvania's First

Industries Tourism Program, Northwest Savings Bank, the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission, the Clarion University Small Business Development Center, and The Progress Fund.

Impact:

The Boni's are transforming an abandoned factory complex into a multi-artist studio and museum expected to draw artists and tourists year-round. When complete, it should secure Ridgway's position as the capital of chainsaw artistry. That's one way to carve out an economic niche!

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