

The Progress Fund

105 Zee Plaza, PO Box 565
Hollidaysburg, PA 16648
Telephone: 814-696-9380

e-mail: dkahley@progressfund.org
Web site: progressfund.org
Fax: 814-696-9569

PRESS RELEASE 5/16/01
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact(s):

Peggy Wirfel, Co-Owner, *Shawnee & Co. Specialties*
(814) 733-9999

David Kahley, President, The Progress Fund
(814) 696-9380

Bette Slayton, Director, Bedford County Office of Economic Development
(814) 623-4816

Upscale Farmer's Market and Specialty Retailer Opens in Schellsburg

Renovation of a vacant Amoco Oil Gas Station on Pitt Street in Schellsburg, Bedford County, marks the transformation of this downtown eyesore into *Shawnee & Co. Specialties*, a premier farmer's market and specialty retailer.

Partners Peggy Wirfel and Michele Glessner opened *Shawnee & Co. Specialties* on May 7th and plan to hold a Grand Opening Celebration over Memorial Day Weekend, which also marks the beginning of the camping and fishing season at Shawnee State Park. Ms. Wirfel and Ms. Glessner also own and operate the Shawnee Country Market, located adjacent to the former gas station. The offerings of *Shawnee & Co. Specialties* will complement those of the grocery/market.

"We are very fortunate to find a suitable structure for our new venture in such a convenient and well-traveled location along US Route 30," said Ms. Wirfel. "We feel that our store and its offerings will provide visitors to Shawnee State Park, as well our neighbors in the community with fresh seasonal plants and local produce, as well as unusual gift and specialty food items."

Residents saw activity at the former gas station and assumed another one was opening. Once they realized the site was being remodeled for a new market, the general feeling was that it would be a better fit within the overall historic character of the community.

"We are delighted to be able to provide financing for *Shawnee & Company Specialties* because it's a win-win situation for the community and owners Peggy Wirfel, Michele Glessner and real estate partner Sharon Hagerich," said Progress Fund Loan Officer, Diane Wiegman. "It was an

added bonus to be able to help eliminate a long time eyesore and potential environmental concern from this rural community.”

Bette Slayton, Director of the Bedford County Office of Economic Development adds, “Tourism is a vital part of the local economy and the addition of a new business into the Bedford County marketplace is welcome, no matter how large or small the activity.”

The Progress Fund provided \$66,000 in financing to the partners for the purchase and renovation of the building to accommodate *Shawnee & Co. Specialties*. The Fund is an equal opportunity lender whose mission is to create economic opportunity by lending needed capital and providing technical assistance to travel and tourism-related businesses in southwestern Pennsylvania. The Fund’s loan portfolio includes 65 loans, which have created over 160 jobs in nine counties. The Progress Fund has provided other loans in Bedford County to the owners of the Jean Bonnet Tavern, Oralee’s Golden Eagle Inn, and Founder’s Crossing to name a few.

The Progress Fund is a spin-off of Congressman Murtha’s Southwestern Pennsylvania Heritage Preservation Commission. “I am pleased that The Progress Fund is creating jobs in the heritage tourism industry for our region and wish them good luck,” said Congressman Murtha.

Pitt Street, better known as the historic Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor (LHHC), is the main thoroughfare through Schellsburg linking Bedford and Breezewood within Bedford County. This historic and scenic drive has long entertained travelers through south central Pennsylvania. Recent Turnpike construction between Bedford and New Stanton has created an alternate route on Route 30, thereby educating new travelers to the natural and man-made wonders of the LHHC.

Shawnee State Park, located to the south of Schellsburg Borough is about 4,000 acres in size and has a large lake with additional recreational areas, campsites and picnic areas. The park is used heavily during the summer months, attracting visitors from local and regional destinations.

###