

Location:

4019 Brookville Street
Hawthorn, PA 16230

County:

Clarion

Description:

Start-up

Total Project Cost:

\$183,500



Tuff's Smokin' Grill

People:

Route 28 is busy enough. Why couldn't the town of Hawthorn sustain a restaurant? School teacher Ray "Tuffy" Shreckengost II pondered that (while perfecting his original barbecue sauces) after another eatery failed on his hometown's main drag. Then it struck him: People don't eat where they can't park, and the site of the defunct restaurants was cramped. What if he bought the vacant building, and the adjacent, empty houses, too?

Progress:

Clarion County Community Bank referred Ray to The Progress Fund. There, he got \$135,000 in financing, including a USDA Rural Microentrepreneur Assistance Program loan.

Impact:

Ray tore down the eyesore homes and shuttered garage to create parking for Tuff's Smokin' Grill. He completely renovated the aging restaurant and built interior walls out of old Hawthorn Standard Garage crates. With an eye to the cyclists on the nearby Redbank Valley Trail, he added to the 45 inside seats a covered porch with space for 25. He put the menu on a chalk board, and festooned it with freshly prepared options including pulled pork, brisket, and burgers – slathered, where appropriate, with his inimitable sauces. Would it work? Starting opening week, travelers and locals alike poured in. Says Ray: "I actually heard some people say, 'I finally have a restaurant that I can actually be a regular at now.'"

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