

Location:

808 Oden Street
Confluence, PA 15424
immersionresearch.com

County:

Somerset

Description:

Energy efficiency

Total Project Cost:

\$67,930



Immersion Research

People:

Riding the rapids tends to make people conscious of the environment. John Weld and his wife, Kara Weld, have been kayaking since age 11. Together, they spent 20 years building Immersion Research, which manufactures, sells and repairs kayaking gear in a former school along the Casselman River. After reading about the economics of solar power, they called an installer, and learned that for less than \$70,000, they'd have no more electricity bill – meaning the panels would pay for themselves in under a decade. But who has \$70,000 lying around?

Progress:

The Welds had borrowed from The Progress Fund three times, and when they sought financing for the panels, they didn't bother with banks. "Banks are saddled with

regulations, and The Progress Fund just doesn't have that. They've really made our dreams come true, and that's not an exaggeration," says John. The fourth time around, The Progress Fund loaned the Welds \$54,345.

Impact:

As the solar panels went up, the Welds were preparing their new, 2,500-square-foot retail space and launching a line of fishing waders. Now, under the glow of sun-powered lights, their green-thinking customers "can come see their gear being repaired, and us cutting fabric and new gear being tested," says John. The Welds, meanwhile, won't pay a dime to the power company. "This is a great piece of marketing for us," says John, "but it also makes excellent business sense for us."

The Progress Fund is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

