

Project Profile

Location:

107 N. 2nd Avenue
Elizabeth, PA

County:

Allegheny

Description:

Start-up brewery
and taproom

Total Project Cost:

\$58,224



Firewhistle Brewing



People:

Jason Berman is a paramedic, community theater manager, pianist, dog owner and homebrewer who readily shares his Flying Arch IPA. "It just makes me feel so good when I make it, and a lot of people around here love it," Jason says of the beer, named after Archie, a French bulldog and Boston terrier mix. Not surprisingly, his Elizabeth Borough neighbors embraced his bid to launch a brewery and taproom. Eager to start, Jason financed brewing equipment with a personal loan — at 27% interest.

Progress:

The University of Pittsburgh's Small Business Development Center helped Jason with his business plan, and steered him toward a different lender. The Progress Fund refinanced the personal loan and provided capital — at much friendlier terms — to double his brewing capacity and furnish the taproom.

Impact:

Flying Arch may be Jason's sentimental favorite, but he brews wheats, reds, stouts, lagers and more. He's also tapping the area's array of wine, cider and meade makers, plus cooperating with the pizza shop next door to give customers an array of choices. That community spirit helps Firewhistle to echo through a growing leisure economy bolstered by the area's rich heritage, warm hospitality and world-class trails. "This beer is for the people of Elizabeth," Jason says, "but hopefully people from around the world come in to try my beer."

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