

Project Profile



Location:

808 Oden Street
Confluence, PA

County:

Somerset

Description:

Business expansion loan

Total Project Cost:

\$165,000



Casselman River Loft

People:

Career kayakers Kara and John Weld live for whitewater but also love urban décor. The couple owns Immersion Research, a renowned manufacturer of kayaking gear. Based in charming Confluence, where the Youghiogheny and Casselman meet, it fills most of a 100-year-old school building. The top floor, though, was underutilized. "It has high ceilings," John says. "It has these gigantic windows that overlook the river." Imagine waking up there.

Progress:

The Progress Fund had loaned the Welds the funds to buy the old school and later to install solar panels on the roof. When the Welds bought and converted two houses to vacation rentals, The Progress Fund provided funding again. Then the Welds sought financing to renovate the old school's 2nd floor, they made one call.

Impact:

With The Progress Fund's \$165,000 loan, the Welds transformed dowdy schoolrooms into an "urban apartment," as John puts it. From the open floor plan and interior brick to the stainless steel kitchen, Casselman River Loft could demand top rent in any American downtown. Instead, it's available as an affordable vacation rental perfect for anyone who loves kayaking, boating or cycling – but not roughing it. Says John: "I love the idea of someone walking upstairs and saying, 'Holy cow, this is amazing!'"

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