

Location:

116 E. Main Street
Ligonier, PA

County:

Westmoreland

Description:

Real estate
improvement loan

Total Project Cost:

\$504,670



The Black Bunny Boutique

People:

Stephany Frede puts “whatever my current obsession is” on the racks of The Black Bunny Boutique. Right now, she’s into Western styles. After operating in rented spaces for a decade, she decided to buy a historic building on Ligonier’s central square, known as The Diamond. “Just having my own space lets me be more expressive,” says Stephany, a San Francisco native who came to Ligonier to raise a family. Problem: Summer customers wilted in the un-airconditioned showroom. Tapped out from the building purchase, she struggled to lasso funds for new HVAC.

Progress:

On a bicycle ride, Stephany saw a sign for The Progress Fund in front of a borrower’s storefront. She made the call, and eventually received a \$65,670 loan.

Impact:

Now the boutique’s air is as cool as the clothes, typically sourced from American clothiers that give back to causes ranging from the environment to women’s rights. Stephany also has a new security system and computer. She’s added “something hip and stylish” to a community that’s attracting both day trippers and transplants. “Ligonier is a town out of a Hallmark movie,” she says, where newcomers are advised to embrace its charms while they spur growth, as The Black Bunny Boutique has done. “I love it, and I’m glad that it’s been accepted.”

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