



Project Profile

The Custard Stand Food Products

Location:
Webster Springs, WV

County:
Webster

Description:
Expansion & Equipment Acquisition

Total Project Cost:
\$444,690



Project: The Custard Stand, owned and operated by Arvard “Dee” and Angie Cowger, is a carry out dairy bar and a producer of hot dog chili located in Webster Springs, WV. The carry out dairy bar was started in 1992 featuring a hot dog chili topping based on a family recipe created in the 1920s. The dairy bar serves over 50,000 hot dogs each year topped with Custard Stand Hot Dog Chili. The product is an all beef hot dog chili with no sugar, fillers, additives or preservatives and a unique taste that reminds the consumer of a home made chili.

In June of 2003 Dee and Angie started to sell their hot dog chili in both retail and wholesale market. They converted a three-bay car wash attached to the dairy bar into a USDA inspected production facility. After a modest first year the business began to grow and by early 2006 their product was being sold in over 200 locations across a five state region. However, in order to take advantage of the increasing demand, the owners needed to expand the operation.

Role of NCIF: In early 2006, NCIF and representatives of the West Virginia Small Business Development Center together with Dee and Angie put together a business plan to raise the additional capital needed for the expansion. NCIF provided the working capital and helped raise additional financing from the West Virginia Department of Agriculture and a local bank. NCIF also obtained grant funds to retain consulting firms to develop a cost accounting system and marketing materials for the company.

Impact: Funding provided capital for the construction of a 1,200 square foot addition and automated processing equipment that enabled the company to triple production. The technical assistance enabled the company to enhance their financial management skills and increase their presence in the wholesale market. As a result the company was nominated as Who’s Who in Small Business in West Virginia by the State’s leading business journal.