

KHIC STRENGTHENS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO HELP SMALL BUSINESSES, ENTREPRENEURS

Roughly 50 percent of small businesses fail after 5 years, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. However, when companies obtain expert technical assistance, 90 percent of small companies are still in business after 5 years.

That's the difference that technical assistance can make. And that's why KHIC is redoubling efforts to make those services available to businesses in the region.

It hired two new people to join the technical assistance team and reassigned another staffer from accounting to lending.

The team has expertise in everything from senior level accounting to entrepreneurship to operating a family business.

The KHIC technical assistance team helps with a variety of services:

- Accounting
- Finance
- Cash management
- Business planning
- Financial projections

The team helps prepare small business owners and entrepreneurs for their loan applications to make the process less overwhelming. But it doesn't end there. The team continues to work with borrowers by visiting them routinely to ensure operations continue to go well. In turn, this assistance strengthens

Kentucky Highlands' loan portfolio.

Technical assistance improves the quality of deals and bridges the gap between lender and borrower to improve the package. (Technical assistance and lending are separated, so they don't ever send information to the lender. It goes directly to the borrower.)

One recipient of technical assistance is Bobbie Cox, who founded Rail House Grill in 2020. The grill, convenience store and gas station, which is located in Harlan County on U.S. Highway 119 between Harlan and Cumberland at the trail head of the ATV park, offers home cooked meals with a seating area and delivery service within a 5-mile radius.

"I can cook and run a store, but when it comes to computers, I know nothing," Cox said. "They helped me with Intuit Quick Books. I can get a better overall picture of my business through all the reports it can generate. It will make my business stronger."

To continue to provide additional value to clients, the technical assistance team members participate in ongoing education and certification training themselves. For example, four staffers recently completed the Mastering Microsoft Excel course, which gives them advanced proficiency in data analysis, formulas, automation and visualization. Additionally, they passed the Level 4 Black Belt Credential Exam by demonstrating expert-level Excel skills and mastery of complex functions, macros and efficiency techniques.

They also completed the Grow America certification, which focused on business succession planning and business evaluation training.



AUGMENTING EFFORTS TO ENSURE CLIENTS HAVE TOOLS, KNOWLEDGE, FINANCING THEY NEED

I often talk about the importance of partnerships – with other financial institutions, with local, state and federal government.

But the partnership between Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation and each of its clients is equally important.

We have spent the past year ensuring that we have the in-house resources and expertise to meet the needs of the businesses and other important organizations in the region to help ensure success for the region's job creators.

In this newsletter, you'll see several key ways we are augmenting our efforts to ensure clients have the tools, knowledge and financing they need to thrive:

- The Center at Kentucky Highlands has new training opportunities and resource partners;
- With the help of a \$1.5 million Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) POWER grant, we assisted more than 40 businesses in making significant regional employment and training impacts by providing technical assistance and access to capital, primarily for expansion;
- Our technical assistance team has grown and continues to earn new certifications to provide professional guidance to companies;
- Our recertification with the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFI Fund) helps us effectively leverage resources and increase our capacity, which, in turn, helps increase the



capacity of our job creators in the region; and

- Our wide range of loan options provides the right financing tools for a variety of businesses and even within each business as it evolves and grows.

You'll also read how we're investing in health, agriculture, housing and a camp for children, which improves quality of life and attracts and retains workers.

In our 56-year history, KHIC has weathered four major recessions and economic upheavals of every kind – all while serving one of the most economically distressed regions in the country.

KHIC's consistent focus on maintaining a strong balance sheet, diversifying revenue streams, and implementing rigorous underwriting and portfolio management safeguards position the organization to remain effective – even in the face of reduced grant funding or evolving market conditions.

With a disciplined approach to risk management and technical assistance, KHIC expects to meet its strategic goals, ensuring that our investments continue to foster sustainable growth in the communities we serve while always striving to find new and better ways to help the region's business climate and entrepreneurs.

Sincerely,

President and CEO

LONGTIME BOARD MEMBER JENNIFER JONES REMEMBERED

Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation mourns with family and friends the loss of longtime board member Jennifer Jones.



Her public service will have a lasting impact on the region and also was marked by a number of firsts.

She was the first woman to become chairperson of the Cumberland Valley Area Development District, the first to chair the Kentucky Association of Area Development Districts, the first woman from Kentucky to serve on the National Association of Regional Councils and the first woman to be elected Bell County judge-executive.

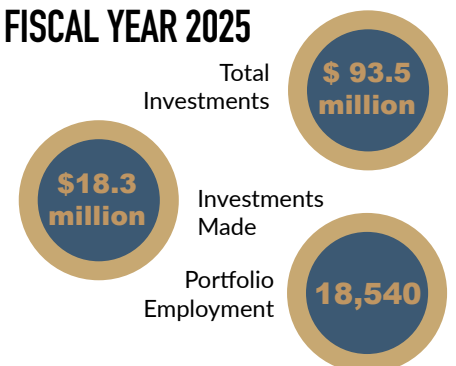
For more than 25 years, Kentucky Highlands was blessed to have her leadership on the board of directors. She will be deeply missed.

KHIC FUNDERS IN 2025

Thank you to our funding partners that invest in this transformational work:

- Appalachian Community Capital-Truist Bank
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Kentucky Office of Ag Policy
- Local Initiative Support Corporation – Rural LISC
- MacKenzie Scott Yield Giving
- Office of Community Services – US Department of Health and Human Services
- Opportunity Finance Network
- PNC Bank
- US Bancorp Community Development Corporation
- US Small Business Administration
- US Department of Agriculture

INVESTING IN OUR COMMUNITY FISCAL YEAR 2025



HIGHLANDS HOUSING PROVIDES AFFORDABLE, EFFICIENT HOMEOWNERSHIP FOR WORKING FAMILIES

Kacie is a single mother with a modest income who was renting a small apartment in Monticello. However, her apartment did not have a yard where her son could play, and she wasn't building equity and the opportunity for generational wealth for her family.

Then she connected with Highlands Housing Corporation, a nonprofit lending and construction organization that has helped almost 200 families achieve the dream of homeownership.

Since November, she and her son have been living in their own home, which has a yard where her son can ride his bike and play with his cars. Her house is affordable and energy efficient, which also helps with the utility bills.

Here's how the process works:

- Highlands Housing meets with prospective homebuyers and works with them to determine how much money they are qualified to borrow based on family size, income and bills. Then it will calculate those numbers to determine the percentage of income that can be devoted to the housing payment. They also will examine current interest rates, local property taxes and homeowner's insurance costs as well as the mortgage payment itself.
- Each homebuyer expresses commitment and perseverance throughout the process before receiving the keys to their new home.
- Certified Homebuyer Education is provided for prospective first-time homebuyers, which creates knowledgeable and default-resilient buyers for a lifetime of homeownership.



- Once in the home, homebuyers make monthly mortgage payments comprised of principal, interest, taxes and insurance.

Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation provided a \$455,000 loan to Highlands Housing, which is being used as working capital to construct homes. In addition to Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation and Highlands

Housing Corporation, other partners provided funding for permanent financing -- USDA Rural Development, Kentucky Housing Corporation, Federal Home Loan Bank, Cumberland Valley National Bank and Commercial Bank.

In fiscal year 2025, eight homes were sold with a direct impact on the lives of 35 people -- 16 adults and 19 children.

Since 2009, 198 homes have been constructed and sold. An estimated average of \$800 per new home is contributed to the tax bases for the region or an annualized \$158,000.

TROOPER ISLAND UPDATES, EXPANDS FACILITIES AT FREE CAMP FOR KENTUCKY CHILDREN

It's more than a summer camp. Trooper Island Kid's Camp is a refuge -- an emotional and developmental experience; a place to ignite hope, nurture personal growth and develop leadership qualities.

The Kentucky State Police (KSP) developed Trooper Island in 1960 as part of a long-range program of public service to the youth of Kentucky: a place where the tensions and turmoil of everyday life can be forgotten.

The camp is free and funded through private donations. There are no income-based criteria or sliding scale fees applied.

Spearheaded by former State Police Director Colonel James E. Bassett, the idea was to establish a permanent recreational site where trooper and child could share a weeklong experience. A location was

selected in a secluded corner of Dale Hollow Lake near the Cumberland and Clinton County line, where an island was leased from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and a non-profit charitable corporation was formed.

Trooper Island accepts children ages 10-12 from all 120 Kentucky counties, and more than 70 former campers now work for KSP.

But Trooper Island continues to wrestle with the challenge of space limitations. Addressing the need for more bunkrooms and counselor accommodations as well as additional bath space have been the focus of the directors for quite some time.

That's where Kentucky Highlands came in. A \$400,000 loan funded



the construction of a new camp bath house and accommodations for KSP trooper volunteers.

"Kentucky Highlands was great to work with -- the ease of the process and getting any questions answered right away," Trooper James Ferrell said.

The 34-acre island holds camps for eight weeks out of the year for more than 750 children. In addition, the facilities are used for trainings and church groups.

FARM LOAN FUND HELPS FOURTH-GENERATION FARMER WITH GROUND-BREAKING RICE FARM

Brian Chadwell is a fourth-generation Madison County farmer whose family has worked the same parcel of land for almost 100 years.

He is one of the few, if not the only, dryland rice farmer in Kentucky. Although most of the world's rice is grown in paddy fields or wet environments that require significant amount of water, rice itself does not need flooding to thrive.

Dryland rice, by contrast, is primarily rain-fed or lightly irrigated and is not reliant on flooded conditions. It is a niche product in the United States, but more than 100 million people worldwide depend on it as their daily staple food.

Although he is only 37-years-old, Chadwell has been researching and working with dryland rice for many years. His interest, passed down through his family, has resulted in a ground-breaking development.

Chadwell's seed was used by Cornell University and USDA when they developed Scarlett rice in 2018 as the first red-bran rice bred for the United States. He

is credited in the research report, and the Scarlett rice was released by Cornell University and USDA as a public variety with no intellectual property restrictions and is royalty free, which is unusual.

Scarlett rice is a long grain rice with a nutty, rich flavor and packed with nutrients. The red bran on the rice has high levels of antioxidants and flavonoids that are common in red-colored grains and fruits, along with naturally produced vitamin E. It grows extremely well in organic conditions and significantly reduces methane emissions.

This year, Chadwell, who also works for Bypass Rentals in Richmond delivering equipment, is growing three acres that will have a harvest of 2,000 to 2,500 pounds of rice in late summer.

For the past 2 years, Chadwell has done all this work by hand with smaller crops of 200 pounds the first year and 500 pounds last year. He realized that if he is to expand production, he needed to mechanize.

With a \$9,000 SOAR Small Farm Production Loan, he purchased a cultivating tractor, plastic mulch system and mower.

SOAR Small Farm Production Loan

How it works:

- Loans up to \$10,000
- Interest rate fixed at 1%
- No fees
- Term of the loan is 5-years
- Interest-only due the first year collected at closing
- Monthly or annual payments
- Collateralized with non-livestock item
- Most any agricultural related use is eligible
- All 54 counties in the Appalachian Regional Commission designated area are eligible

By the numbers:

The fund has approved 415 loans for more than \$3.8 million in less than 10 years, and more than \$2.6 million in principal repayments have been made. Because of its revolving nature, the fund has almost tripled in size.

AUTHOR GARY SCHOENIGER INSPIRES EASTERN KENTUCKY DURING BOOK TOUR



In April, acclaimed author Gary Schoeniger toured Eastern Kentucky to share insights from his new book, *The Entrepreneurial Mindset Advantage: The Hidden Logic that Unleashes Human Potential*.

His tour, which energized students, business leaders and community members across the region, focused on the entrepreneurial mindset as a catalyst for economic growth and personal empowerment.

Schoeniger spoke to a wide range of

audiences, including the Hazard and Perry County Chambers of Commerce, entrepreneurship students at both the University of Pikeville and Berea College, Harlan Independent

High School's entire freshman class, and attendees of the East Kentucky Leadership Conference in Manchester. He encouraged individuals to recognize opportunity, take initiative and persist through challenges to create lasting value within their communities.

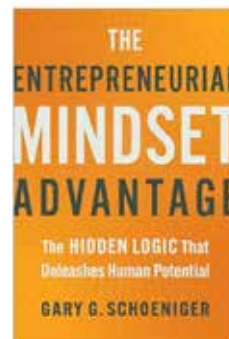
The tour was made possible by the collaboration of 12 economic development organizations committed to fostering a culture

of innovation: Southeast Kentucky Economic Development (SKED), The Center for Rural Development, Mountain Association, Invest 606, SOAR Innovation, Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (EKCEP), Harlan County Beer

Company, Berea College's Entrepreneurship for the Public Good program, East Kentucky Leadership Foundation, Kentucky Small Business Development Center Southeast, BoomKY, and Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation.

"Together, these partners helped bring a transformative message to Eastern Kentucky, equipping

communities with the mindset and tools to build a brighter economic future," said Jerry Rickett, president and CEO of Kentucky Highlands.



ARC FUNDING IMPACTED 40 BUSINESSES TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING GAINS

With the help of a \$1.5 million Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) POWER grant, Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation assisted more than 40 businesses in making significant regional employment and training impacts by providing technical assistance and access to capital, primarily for expansion.



Irene Beeman

through professional development, education and training.

However, KHIC found there were barriers to participation.

To capture the attention of busy executives, all programs -- especially new ones -- need to be made as simple and responsive as possible.

The reporting requirements were modest but seemed burdensome to many of the organizations using the program.

Small business owners and executives of large health-care facilities, especially when in growth mode, appreciate having a person or team of people external to their business to test ideas, identify and plan strategies, help them plan their cashflow, identify new markets, and help them access capital.

KHIC offered technical assistance to those businesses to help with expansion and also to create a “grow-your-own path” for advancement of employees in the region.

For example, American Health Management, which provides a variety of health and adult day services for seniors in the region, prefers to promote from within. The EZ/PZ Career Ladder Incentive Program (CLIP) provided financial assistance to employees for investing in certifications or higher education, with 10 to 15 employees taking advantage. One young woman seized this opportunity and has excelled. She began as an Attendant Care Associate, was promoted to Patient Care Coordinator, and is now nearing the completion of a nursing degree, partly thanks to this program.

“With the help of KHIC, it’s made my pursuit of becoming an RN more achievable by lightening the financial load,” Irene Beeman said. “I have immense gratitude for this funding program!”

The Kentucky Highlands Empowerment Zone/Promise Zone (EZ/PZ) Project helped the regional economy in three key areas:

- Addressed a regional shortage in capital and specialized technical assistance to support small- and medium-sized businesses;
- Increased labor participation rates through remote work opportunities; and
- Encouraged employee upward mobility through career-advancing continuing education.

Led by Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, the EZ/PZ Project applies more than 56 years of small business investing and technical assistance experience, the Empowerment Zone 5-year employee tax credit extension, and Promise Zone designation benefits.

The funding also helped KHIC’s long-term partner, EKCEP, test the effectiveness of its Teleworks USA program outside of its traditional service area. Teleworks provides work-from-home opportunities by connecting job seekers with legitimate remote work.

One area of focus for technical assistance was the Career Ladder Incentive Program, which is designed to provide employees with a clear path for advancement within their organizations



KHIC RECEIVES COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTION RECERTIFICATION

Community Development Financial Institutions are private financial organizations, such as Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation, that provide financial services to underserved communities.

These institutions, which also include banks, credit unions, loan funds and venture capital funds, focus on serving areas where traditional financial institutions are less active. They often prioritize community development.

The Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFI Fund), which was established within the U.S. Department of the Treasury in 1994, invests in these local financial institutions across the nation to increase community and economic development in distressed urban and rural areas, which are often overlooked by traditional financing.

KHIC was one of the pioneering organizations to obtain CDFI certification in 1996 and recently became one of the first CDFIs to be recertified, which then provides access to financial and technical assistance awards from the CDFI Fund.

“This certification enables KHIC to effectively leverage resources from the CDFI Fund within our service area,” said Brenda McDaniel, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer of Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation. “By increasing our capacity, we are then able to help increase the capacity of the job creators in the region.”

SOLID STEEL SOLUTIONS RECEIVED SBA STATE, NATIONAL AWARD



Solid Steel Solutions recently received the state and national Rural Excellence Award from the Small Business Administration.

The company, based in Middlesboro, has a 20,000 square-foot facility in the Whitmer Industrial Park in Middlesboro and 14 full-time employees.

“We’re so excited that we’ve won two SBA awards—one at the state level and one at the national level,” President & CEO Missy Carter said. “I want to give a huge thanks to Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation for being there from the very beginning—not just with financing but also with the technical support we needed to grow. Your dedication means the world to us.”

“And a massive thank you to our team. These recognitions reflect the hard work, dedication and grit of our entire team. We’re proud to represent our industry and grateful for the opportunity to keep building stronger futures—one weld, one cut, one solution at a time.”

In this competitive industry, Solid Steel has made a name for itself, particularly for the excellent customer service it provides for repair and reworking of highwall mining coal auguring equipment throughout eastern Kentucky, western Virginia and West Virginia. Carter also is leading efforts to diversify Solid Steel’s client base to include other industries.

The company has come a long way. When it was in turmoil, Carter, who was one of the original employees, kept the business going. She started as a secretary, then became office manager before her current role leading the company.



MOMENTUM CONTINUES FOR THE CENTER AT KENTUCKY HIGHLANDS

New training, resource partners, tenants and office opportunities marked a busy year at 440 Old Whitley Road. Here are some highlights from The Center at Kentucky Highlands:

Training

A new workshop from the London-Laurel County Chamber of Commerce Training and Development Committee called Welcoming Strategies for Small Business Success held its first session at the Center.

It was accepted into the Rural LISC Verizon Small Business Digital Ready program, which is designed to give small businesses the tools and resources they need to thrive in today’s digital economy and ultimately benefit their local communities.

From courses and live coaching sessions to personalized learning plans, it’s a free and easy way for entrepreneurs and other business owners to improve their skills and knowledge.

In addition, the Center worked with the University of Louisville’s Manufacturing Extension Partnership to create training and development content to serve the region’s manufacturers.

New resource providers

The number of resource providers calling The Center their home in London has expanded to include the Small Business Development Center, KY Apex, SOAR Innovation, Invest 606 and the Impact Appalachia Fund,

Code-You and SCORE.

“Kentucky Highlands’ investment in creating a space where entrepreneurs can connect, collaborate and cultivate their ideas is truly transformational,” said Rodney Kuhl, director of the Southeastern Kentucky Small Business



Development Center. “It’s not just about providing an office—it’s about building a vibrant community where innovation is encouraged, and support is always within reach. We’re proud to be part of a renewed vision that empowers local

businesses to dream big and grow strong.”

New tenants

The Center has welcomed East 80 Trade School, Soggy Bottom Environmental and South Central Kentucky Small Business Development Center, which opened a complete podcasting studio.

New office opportunities

Space has been reconfigured and reimaged to provide a range of opportunities for small businesses:

- New leasing agreements were created, including a mini-lease for first-come, first-served reservations of the conference and training rooms as well as use of the kitchen or kitchenette for co-working space;
- Cubicles were removed to provide another business suite that can be leased as a unit; and
- A new leasing agreement allows for a virtual office, which provides a low-cost option for businesses that need a mailing address in London.

KHIC AWARDED COLEMAN RURAL MAIN STREET LENDER OF THE YEAR

Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation was named the Coleman Rural Main Street Lender of the Year.

Last year, KHIC made a total of 155 SBA and USDA loans totaling \$21,488,737.

“One in 10 folks living in our service area will have dinner tonight with a bread winner who has a job with a company that has been assisted by KHIC,” said President and CEO Jerry Rickett.

The nomination was evaluated by a distinguished panel of past winners of awards from Coleman, which is the leading provider of information to small business bankers to help them make less risky small business loans. It also is the largest producer of training courses and webinars for small business bankers.

Since its founding in 1968, KHIC has made loans or investments totaling more than \$700 million to a total of 1,109 small businesses, creating or maintaining a total of 29,303 jobs.

Special congratulations to the seven-member lending team:

- Mark Bolinger, Executive Vice President
- Joey Carter, Investment Analyst
- Edgar Davis, Business Development Specialist
- Joyce Hickey, Financial Analyst
- Genia Hoffman, Documentation Manager
- Tyler Lake, Investment Analyst
- Birdie Watkins, Investment Analyst

SUNNY SAVINGS FOR MUSEUM, COMMUNITY COMMERCIAL KITCHEN IN LAUREL COUNTY THAT HELP NEIGHBORS IN NEED



Wayne Riley founded the Laurel County African American Heritage Center (LCAAHC) in 2004 in a building where he worshiped as a child. The nonprofit has since grown to include a museum/historical center on Mill Street, a commercial kitchen in a house further down Mill Street with the support of Grow Appalachia and the HEAD Corporation, and a 48-acre farm owned by the Riley family in East Bernstadt.

And most recently, it has solar energy system on both buildings that will cut its energy from \$400 per month to about \$25 per month as well as make it eligible for a federal rebate.

“We’re hoping it will be a great asset to the center and have a great impact that will allow us to use the money for other things inside the building,” Riley said.

Riley and the center continue to look for ways to help the community inside and outside the building.

He was one of the first site coordinators employed by Grow Appalachia in 2010. Currently, there are 28 families participating in the Laurel County Grow Appalachia program, which he continues to manage.

The Grow Appalachia community garden facilities were originally located on 14th Street above Mill Street until those seven acres were sold. It is now in East Bernstadt and includes seven high tunnel greenhouses,

a solar powered irrigation system, extensive surface gardens, a well-stocked tool shed within a semi-trailer, six Grillo tractors, delivery trucks and many other resources.

In 2016, the city of London donated a house to LCAAHC for development as a community commercial kitchen. The house, which was in good condition, sat directly behind the London Community Center and was scheduled to be torn down to make room for an expansion of the Community Center.

In these facilities, LCAAHC operates the extensively outfitted community kitchen that is used by food trucks as well as commercial and private growers in the area for packaging food. It also sponsors the Grow Appalachia program and workshops in Laurel County as well as the annual Martin Luther King Jr. celebration in London.

LCAAHC also distributes donated food items to families in need as well as collects and delivers many truckloads of items to flood victims in Eastern Kentucky and tornado victims in Western Kentucky with its semi-trailers and a refrigerated trailer that can transport and store food.

The solar project was funded by the Mountain Association, the Kentucky Highlands OFN Solar Loan Fund/OFN Finance Justice Fund and LCAAHC.

Kentucky Highlands is one of the first community development financial institutions in the country to receive the Opportunity Finance Network (OFN) grant, which provides lending capital or loan loss reserves for renewable and energy-efficiency financing programs.

FROM FLOODED TO HONORED

CORNETT FARM NAMED KENTUCKY WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Less than 3 years ago, the Cornetts' farm faced financial distress because almost a foot of rain fell, and its river bottom land in Laurel County was flooded. About 70 percent of their crops were impacted.

Fast forward to 2025, and Cornett Farm Fresh was named Woman-Owned Small Business of the Year in Kentucky by the Small Business Administration.

"Being chosen for this award is such an honor," said Rhonda Cornett, owner and operator. "Since I began this business in 2020, we have faced many challenges including a worldwide pandemic, flood, road construction and more, so to be recognized for this award means more than you could imagine. I am truly grateful."

Rhonda and her husband, Brent, primarily sell their peppers, eggplant, summer squash, cucumbers and zucchini on the wholesale market with the produce ending up in stores such as Walmart and Kroger. The farm also grows significant quantities of tomatoes, sweet corn, strawberries, beans and many other vegetables, which are sold through its Cornett Farm Fresh store in London.

After the flooding, Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation was able to provide the Cornetts with a lower interest rate and an operating line of credit to fill the gap until crop insurance applications were reviewed.

"The way that Kentucky Highlands really wanted to know our operation and know us helped find the best option for us," Rhonda said. "It's not just a quick fix. It will help us for years to come. We don't just have a lender. We have a partner."

CROSSROADS RAILCAR SERVICES UTILIZES MULTIPLE LENDING TOOLS TO EXPAND BUSINESS



If you've ridden the Big South Fork or the French Lick Scenic Railways, you may have experienced the craftsmanship of Crossroads Railcar Services.

The company offers complete refurbishment and restoration services for passenger railcars (primary dining cars) used in the U.S. tourism, scenic, excursion and historic railroad market. Crossroads also services and repairs private railcars to keep them looking and running their best.

In addition, it manufactures a custom line of Thoroughbred private passenger railcars at its 25,000 square foot facility in Stearns. Crossroads mechanics and craftsmen also will travel to make repairs at a customer's location.

Steven and Michelle Richards formed the company in 2013 at the former Stearns Coal and Lumber locomotive shop. They have been clients of Kentucky Highlands since 2015 and used a variety of financing products to sustain and expand their business.



Crossroads began in the refurbishing side of the business but several years ago wanted to begin manufacturing a new line of scenic open-air passenger railcars to be used by the hundreds of recreational and tourist's railroads. It turned to Kentucky Highlands for a USDA Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) loan for working capital to purchase raw

materials and labor to construct its first new rail car. United Cumberland Bank also provided working capital financing.

Most recently, Crossroads received an SBA microloan for debt consolidation.

"Crossroads is an excellent example of the various financing tools KHIC can offer to help businesses in the region," said Mark Bolinger, vice president of business lending for Kentucky

Highlands. "When we have the opportunity to meet the financial needs of a locally owned business to help them sustain and grow, it brings additional jobs and spending to the area – creating an impact not only for the owners and employees but for the community at large."