

Small Business Advantage Grant Winner



"The SBDC was our cheerleader. I have recommended and will continue to recommend their services."

- Brian Propst

Brian & Tracy Propst
B. D. Propst Trucking
151 Rio Grande Road
Clearville, PA 15535-5540
Bedford County

Industry: Transportation

Year Founded: 2001

SBDC Assistance: Small Business Advantage Grant

Additional Partners: Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Saint Francis University SBDC
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Brian and Tracy Propst never gave up. They own B. D. Propst Trucking, a small business located in Clearville, PA, which operates a tractor trailer for interstate freight transportation. In order to reduce fuel consumption and comply with an increasing number of anti-idling laws, Brian's goal became to purchase an Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) with the help of a state-funded grant. The APU powers the truck's heating and air conditioning without the need for the truck to be idling.

At an annual safety meeting in March 2009 Brian became informed about the possibilities of a grant to help purchase an APU. "I became particularly interested in the Small Business Advantage Grant Program, whose objective is to assist small PA business owners reduce their energy or pollution handling costs," stated Brian.

With the help of his wife, Tracy, who manages the business, Brian set out to work. After making several phone calls to various offices, the Propsts contacted State Representative Dick Hess, who pointed Tracy in the right direction to their local Small Business Development Center (SBDC). They soon began working with Environmental Consultant Charles Haney, who helped them through every step of the application as well as the financial calculations necessary to complete the paperwork. Tracy states, "If I ever had a question that Charles didn't know the answer to off hand, he would find an answer very quickly."

"How to overcome obstacles became the theme to receiving this grant," stated Brian when discussing the many challenges they had to face. The first shock came when they learned that they would have to pay for and install the APU before they would be considered for the grant. Paying for this unit upfront came to be a big challenge for Brian and Tracy. Shortly after applying for the grant, the department contacted them and requested they verify that their APU of choice was approved by the Environmental Protection Agency's Smartway Program. After overcoming this obstacle they resubmitted their application only to receive more bad news: the state had a spending freeze until a new budget was passed. After waiting months, Brian and Tracy finally received a check in the mail in July 2010.

Brian acknowledges his appreciation for the guidance he received from the SBDC. He explained that through all the obstacles they faced, they would have lost all hope if it were not for Charles. Tracy stated that Charles had always been there to encourage them that it would work out in the end. After reflecting on the consulting received, Brian said, "The SBDC was our cheerleader. I have recommended and will continue to recommend their services."