



WEST VIRGINIA

Mountaineer Brand

CDFI FINANCES INDUSTRIOUS WEST VIRGINIAN'S SUCCESS

NATURAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUND



Eric Young Checks His Product

"Mountaineer Brand is a business I started in 2013 in my kitchen. I never expected it could be anything like it is. There are a lot of things NCIF has done for us from the beginning that's helped us to grow."

Eric Young, Founder and CEO, Mountaineer Brand

Many American small businesses began as good ideas born out of necessity and were then grown out of home offices or garages. The Mountaineer Brand small business is no exception. While growing a beard may seem like a natural and simple thing, in reality it isn't. Growing and maintaining a well-groomed beard requires the use of products that reduce skin irritation and ensure healthy facial hair. In response to this need, Eric Young developed a natural beard oil in his kitchen. His own luxurious beard soon became the best advertisement for his product. Soon, many friends and neighbors were asking to buy his product and in 2013 Mountaineer Brand was born.

The demand and online sales for the natural beard oil dramatically increased so Eric moved production from his kitchen to his garage. This dramatic increase required additional financing. Unfortunately Eric lacked a strong credit rating, so traditional bank financing was not an option available to him. He approached Natural Capital Investment Fund (NCIF), a certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI), for support.

In 2017, NCIF stepped in and provided the financial support

CDFI Fund Lender:

Natural Capital Investment Fund

Project Investment:

- \$150,000 Line of Credit
- \$216,000 Equipment Loan
- \$40,000 Solar Loan

Total: \$406,000

Community Profile: Martinsburg, West Virginia

- Population: 17,404
- Median Income: \$36,976
- 28.8% Poverty Rate
- 4% Unemployment Rate

Project Highlights

- Automation of production
 - Increase in customer base including international sales
 - Product sales and revenue have greatly increased
 - Community has a stable business entity
 - The company will increase their staffing level from 14 to 19 employees
-

Mountaineer Brand needed. This included several rounds of flexible working capital with a \$150,000 line of credit and an additional \$216,000 for equipment to automate and scale production.

After the company expanded production from his kitchen and into his garage, NCIF also provided \$40,000 and technical assistance for the installation of a 9.4 kilowatt solar array on the roof of Eric's house. The company's commitment to sustainability and ability to offset their electric usage led to Mountaineer Brand's decision to install a solar array. The company benefitted from a 30 percent federal energy tax credit as well as a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant.

Through NCIF's support, Mountaineer Brand is now located in a large industrial space and business is booming. The company now provides 14 jobs and expects to hire five additional people as a result of the expansion and related financing. Eric's sister, Meredith, is the COO and together they have become a winning team. Their product line has increased to include body care products and customers now include large retailers Meijer, Walmart, and Amazon, as well as customers in Europe.

Natural Capital Investment Fund is a small business loan fund that supports entrepreneurs who are creating jobs and businesses in underserved communities in central Appalachia and the Southeast. For more information visit their website at www.ncifund.org.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT THE IMPACT OF CDFIS
AROUND THE COUNTRY,
VISIT WWW.CDFIFUND.GOV**