

PRATHER'S IGA

2nd Congressional District

Healthy Food for Ohio Funds Rural, Family-owned Grocery

A family owned and operated independent IGA grocery store in rural West Union, Ohio has received funding from the Healthy Food for Ohio program (HFFO), a statewide public-private partnership. HFFO launched in March 2016 with seed capital from the state's FY2016-2017 biennial budget and is administered by Finance Fund Capital Corporation (FCAP).

Prather's IGA will use funding from HFFO to improve its fresh food selection and reduce operating costs to continue serving as West Union's only downtown grocery store within walking distance of many low-income residents.

HFFO funding will help replace the store's failing 30-year-old equipment and expand produce and meat departments with newer refrigeration cases. Ongoing utility, maintenance and repair costs on previous equipment amounted to \$75,000 annually. The more energy-efficient equipment will greatly reduce the store's utility costs and eliminate downtime for repairs. Other renovations to the 22,000 sq. ft. store include enhancements to the meat cutting room, bakery, deli, and front entrance.

Prather's IGA is serving a vital need in a trade area with a poverty rate approaching 28 percent. Nearly one in five residents is at least 65 years old. "Not only is the store providing healthy food access to the intended demographic, Prather's IGA is critical to the vitality of West Union," said FCAP CFO Matt Frank.

The store has provided many West Union residents with living wages and flexible hours at some point in their lives. An active community supporter, Prather's IGA supports many local groups and events such as the County Fair and Head Start.

"We try to keep our prices as low as possible knowing that household income for Adams County is much lower than the statewide average," said Jay Prather, second generation IGA proprietor. Prather's IGA still hand cuts and packages meat, and offers home delivery and carry out service on groceries. "Many of our customers are on some sort of assistance program, whether it be SNAP, WIC or veterans' vouchers. We fill a niche that Walmart and Kroger do not," he said.

The project was referred to HFFO through the OSU Extension Office in nearby Piketon, Ohio.



FINANCE FUND CAPITAL CORPORATION INVESTMENT IMPACT:

- Helps retain jobs for 38 employees
- Fills a grocery and service niche important to the area's older, disabled and low-income residents
- Rehabilitates an existing facility to expand healthy food selection and improve operations



Jay Prather, second generation proprietor, Prather's IGA

PRATHER'S IGA

107 East Walnut Street
West Union, Ohio 45693

About Healthy Food for Ohio

The HFFO program provides flexible financing to fund costs associated with land acquisition, predevelopment, construction, equipment, infrastructure and related expenses. Financing can be used for capital projects to build new healthy food retail or expand existing facilities in underserved areas. A wide range of projects is eligible for funding including: grocery chains, individual grocery stores, neighborhood food stores, co-ops and other food projects such as farmers' markets and food hubs.