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CITY OF MUSCATINE PRESS RELEASE

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PAIR OF \$25,000 SBFL ARE PRESENTED TO LOCAL BUSINESSES

Skinny's Barbeque, Thompson Trucking receive Small Business Forgivable Loans

MUSCATINE, Iowa – Two local businesses, one currently open and one just weeks away from opening, will have their renovation efforts assisted with a \$25,000 Small Business Forgivable Loan (SBFL) provided through the City of Muscatine Department of Community Development.

Thompson Trucking, Inc., recently moved from their location on Houser Street to the former Orscheln Farm and Home store at 1607 Grandview Avenue, and Skinny's Barbeque will open in the Pearl Plaza at 208 West 2nd Street in the near future. Both will use the SBFL proceeds to continue renovations to both properties.

After eight years of working for his father at *Boonies on the Avenue*, Cord Kleist decided it was time to make his own mark on the restaurant industry in Muscatine with the establishment of Skinny's Barbeque, a dream he has been working on for the last several years.

Kleist, his wife, Megan, and son, Theodore (Theo), were on hand Tuesday afternoon to receive the \$25,000 SBFL check from Community Development Director Jodi Royal-Goodwin and City Planner Lindsay Whitson.

"Skinny's Barbeque will provide barbeque food, soups, salads, and daily specials," Whitson said. "The menu will be a chalkboard menu, meaning that it will consistently change. Skinny's

Barbeque is projected to attract a large lunch crowd, local business gatherings, family-size takeout orders, and offer catering throughout the region.”

Kleist has worked at *Boonies on the Avenue* ever since his father and mother (Mike and Teresa) established “Boonies” eight years ago.

“I had this idea about barbeque and talked about it with my father,” Kleist said. “He listened, told me to do my investigating, and bring him a business plan.”

Kleist admitted that he didn’t realize how much work there would be in investigating and drafting a business plan, and, in the end, determined that opening a restaurant was something that he wanted to do on his own.

“I told my dad that I wanted to do this on my own and he gave me his full support,” Kleist said. “It took a trip to the south to taste different barbeque that convinced my wife, however.”

Work on the ground floor restaurant inside Pearl Plaza has been going on at a fever pace for the last several months and the remodeling is taking shape. Kleist believes he is still four or five weeks before opening the restaurant but he is anxious to open the doors to customers.

“I have one more week at ‘Boonies’ and then it is all about ‘Skinny’s’,” Kleist said. “I hope to set an opening date then.”

Skinny's Barbeque will be utilizing the Small Business Forgivable Loan funds to renovate the building with permanent fixtures and code compliant updates.

“Thompson Trucking, Inc., is primarily a supplier of trucking services,” Whitson said. “They are a family owned business that has been operation in the City of Muscatine since the 1950s. They have outgrown their original property and have relocated and expanded their business to 1607 Grandview Avenue.”

Judy Eichelberger, president of Thompson Trucking, Inc., received the \$25,000 SBFL from Royal-Goodwin and Whitson at Muscatine City Hall Tuesday (August 6) morning.

“The Houser Street property has been great but we really needed more space, especially indoor space to work on the trucks and for storage,” Eichelberger said. “Driving by the Orscheln site we could not help but notice how much space there was for the outside lot. And the building is big enough to accommodate our needs as well.”

Renovations to the building are an ongoing process for the company who moved into their new home last June.

“It is a work in progress and the ceiling is a little low for some of our needs but that can be addressed in the future,” Eichelberger said.

Eichelberger also noted that the move will also help facilitate continued expansion of the company both in terms of business opportunities and in personnel.

Thompson Trucking operations include contracting haul flatbed, van, bulk, and liquid commodities. They offer excavation of borrow sites and handle contracts that vary from hundreds of thousands of yards of material delivered to hot shot delivers of small pickup loads.

Their services are primarily offered regionally in Iowa and surrounding states, but occasionally are contracted much further out. The new and much bigger space will allow Thompson Trucking to expand into additional markets including fleet repair and tire services, tire and parts sales, as well as increasing their overall number of employees.

Their current location only provides ample space to service trucks that belong to Thompson Trucking, but expanding will allow for truck and tire repair to outside customers as well.

Three other Muscatine businesses received SBFL’s earlier this year including Bosch Pest Control, Bridge Side Pub LLC, and Wine Nutz. For more information on these businesses, read the story [here](#).

SMALL BUSINESS FORGIVABLE LOAN PROGRAM - The City of Muscatine offers Small Business Forgivable Loans for building improvements and startup cost associated with the



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creation of a new business or to existing businesses significantly expanding into a new market, product or service. Businesses can obtain a loan for up to \$25,000 at a term of five years with 20 percent of the original loan forgiven annually at the anniversary of the origination of the loan. Funds are allocated up to \$15,000 for startup cost and up to \$10,000 for code compliance.

The City has allocated \$100,000 in funding annually. Funds will be awarded to qualifying businesses based on availability of funds.

For more information visit the [SBFL](#) page on the City of Muscatine web site.