



A Regional Growth Corporation

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## **SKED Helps Laurel County Couple Get Their Business on the Right Track**

LONDON, Ky. - What began as a part-time hobby has developed into a full-time career for one Laurel County couple.

Spending time together working on crafts, picture frames and book shelves, Michael and Penny Casteel enjoyed creating their own gifts for family and friends in their spare time. Soon their hobby had developed into a part-time business and eventually created enough demand for the two to establish their own business and hire help



SKED Director of Lending Michael Bush, left, goes over loan documents with Michael and Penny Casteel, owners of Casteel Woodworking in Laurel County.

The development of what is now Casteel Woodworking was an evolutionary process and one that the still amazes the Casteels.

Beginning in a corner of their basement with a few shop tools and rudimentary drawings, the Casteels have expanded and purchased new equipment as the demand for their work increased. At the urging of friends and relatives, they began producing trim moulding for home construction. "People were bringing me their own lumber to trim and mould."

Soon, Michael's success at his hobby had worked him out of his full-time job with GTE. And the demand for his work was so great he bit the bullet and built a building and more equipment for their flourishing business. With Michael overseeing the daily operations, construction, installation and bidding, Penny used her insurance and banking experience to oversee the financial administration of the business.

"The demand grew so large I couldn't keep up with the woodworking and work full time," Michael explained. "I quit my job with the telephone company and built a 28x45 square-foot building. Then, I

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bought an old 5-head moulder and rip saw from Chaney Lumber. I think they came over on the Mayflower with the Pilgrims,” he added with a grin. In no time, they were filling contracts for commercial building contractors and doubling the size of the building. The rest is history for the Casteels.

But turning a hobby into a full-time job isn't easy and can even be risky. In 2007 The Casteels were set back by a partnership that didn't flourish and regrouped to get the business back on track. In 2009, the Casteels incorporated as a new business and began operations again. But this time they had help from

The Casteels needed help in restructuring their financing to keep their current contracts fulfilled and develop even more. They called on Southeast Kentucky Economic Development Corporation (SKED) and Kentucky Highlands Investment Corporation (KHIC) to assist in keeping the business producing and its employees working.

SKED was able to assist the Casteels with a loan using funds provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Business Enterprise Grant. Together, SKED and KHIC worked to keep the Casteels in business and continuing to grow.

“Working with small business owners who love what they do and have devoted their lives to doing it is what makes my job enjoyable,” said SKED Director of Lending Michael Bush. “The Casteels have developed a fine business and just needed a little help working through some growing pains. They are on their way to many more years of success in the woodworking business. SKED is proud to have played a role in seeing that happen.”

Today, Casteel Woodworking, Inc. employs four people full time constructing cabinets for the commercial market.

For more information about SKED's loan programs, call Michael Bush at (606) 677-6100 or go to [www.southeastkentucky.com](http://www.southeastkentucky.com).

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*SKED is a nonprofit economic development organization formed by Congressman Hal Rogers in 1986 to create jobs in a 42-county service area in Southern and Eastern Kentucky. It accomplishes this mission by recruiting new businesses, making direct loans, offering small business technical assistance and providing community/economic development services to local communities. For more information about SKED, visit: [www.southeastkentucky.com](http://www.southeastkentucky.com).*