

Artisan Exchange Hosts Congressman Costello

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West Chester, Pennsylvania, August 27, 2015—Artisan Exchange in West Chester today hosted Congressman Ryan Costello (PA-06). [Artisan Exchange](#), a food manufacturing and distribution hub, brings together small business entrepreneurs committed to producing hand-crafted, sustainable food products. Congressman Costello is using the opportunity to witness in person the role that Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) play in successful project investments.

Artisan Exchange received financing from [The Reinvestment Fund](#) for construction and equipment costs related to a new, 1,000-square-foot commercial kitchen that expands the variety of locally-produced food that the facility can support. TRF is a leading national CDFI and has financed over \$230 million in healthy food access projects. TRF is also a recipient federal Healthy Food Financing Initiative (HFFI) funding.

“With the expansion, small businesses will be able to broaden their repertoire of product options. And with the ability to offer new products at a variety of venues – the hope is that businesses will reach a wider customer base,” added Don Hinkle-Brown, President and CEO of The Reinvestment Fund.

Artisan Exchange can provide up to 60 independent food manufacturers with the space necessary to produce their goods and meet USDA and PA Department of Agriculture sanitation and production standards at affordable rate. The 27,000

square-foot hub encourages collaboration among the businesses; members can work together to share ideas, engage in bulk purchasing, and enjoy other benefits that Artisan Exchange continues to develop. The hub has already supported the growth of over 50 local companies and continues to attract entrepreneurs from other states to locate here in Pennsylvania.

Congressman Costello's visit serves as an opportunity for discussion, offering business owners time to speak with their local representative about issues that are important to them. Businesses associated with Artisan Exchange have voiced concerns about issues including the FDA and food safety in regards to organics. Another issue is financing options and support including the Farm Credit System, the CDFI Fund and federal resources available.

"The financing we received from MidAtlantic Farm Credit, the USDA and The Reinvestment Fund enabled us to create a comprehensive artisanal food manufacturing hub that is unique and as far as we know the only facility of its kind in the United States" said Frank Baldassarre, owner of Artisan Exchange.

The Exchange also facilitates group sales to institutional buyers, including Whole Foods, which is currently carrying an assortment of Artisan Exchange products.

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About The Reinvestment Fund

TRF is a national leader in rebuilding America's distressed towns and cities through the innovative use of capital and information. TRF has made \$1.5 billion in community investments since 1985. A Community Development Financial Institution, TRF finances a variety of projects and activities including food access, health care, education and housing, to build healthy communities in under-invested places. TRF also provides public policy expertise by helping clients create actionable solutions and by sharing data and analysis via www.PolicyMap.com. To learn more about TRF, visit www.trfund.com. Follow TRF on Twitter @trfund or Facebook at facebook.com/TRFund.

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Reinvestment Fund is an equal opportunity provider.

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