









A Guide to Doing Business in Oil City, Pennsylvania

Oil City Main Street Program 217 Elm Street, Oil City PA 16301 (814) 677-3152 x 101

www.oilcitymainstreet.org

Introduction

Welcome to Downtown Oil City!

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Downtown Oil City has majestic architecture, unique shops & restaurants, stately churches and scenic views of the Allegheny River and Oil Creek. By locating your business in downtown Oil City, your neighbors will include:

- 14 restaurants, cafes & taverns
- 22 shops & galleries
- 6 banks/credit unions
- 17 professional services (legal, financial, insurance)
- 11 health care professionals, plus the YMCA and YWCA
- Justus Park, the National Transit Building, Oil City Library and the Venango Museum of Art, Science & History

We'd love for you to be a part of our business district.... let's get started!

Starting a Business

Starting a business isn't easy or quick. Get the information you need to write a business plan, research potential locations, obtain financing, and get you on your way! We encourage you to contact our local SCORE and SBDC offices for free confidential assistance:

SCORE

217 Elm Street, Oil City Frank J. Hajduk 814.677.3152 phone www.erie.score.org To request a face-to-face meeting, log on above then click "Mentoring." Under "Meet Face to Face" click "Request a Meeting" then complete the brief request form & submit... a local SCORE mentor will contact you to arrange a confidential meeting.

Clarion University SBDC (Small Business Development Center)

330 North Point Drive, Suite 100 Clarion, PA 16214-3873 877.292.1843 sbdc@clarion.edu http://web.clarion.edu/sbdc

Clarion University SBDC First Step Seminars

"The First Step: How to Start and Finance Your Business:" This monthly seminar provides an overview on the steps to start a business along with an in-depth look at a business plan. Topics include business registrations, licenses, business structures, taxation, research tools, and what to expect in financing your business. For dates, times, and locations, visit http://web.clarion.edu/SBDC/training/firststep.asp.

New Business Checklist

If you're thinking of opening a business in Oil City, be sure visit both City Hall and the Main Street Office:

City of Oil City 21 Seneca Street, Oil City PA 16301 www.oilcity.org Online permits: http://www.oilcity.org/online-forms-and-permits Zoning Department: 3rd Floor (814) 678-3016

201111g Department: 3 11001 (814) 070-3010	
☐ Check on zoning restrictions that may affect your business concept	
☐ Obtain signage criteria for your storefront sign	
Code Administration Office: 1 st Floor (814) 678-3003	
☐ Apply for a Business License	
☐ Obtain permits for construction and/or renovations	
☐ Arrange for Commercial Fire Prevention Inspections	
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Police Department: 1 st Floor (814) 678-3080	
☐ Inquire about permit parking (in city-owned parking lots) for you and/or your employees	
Utility Office: City Hall, 1 st Floor (814) 678-3002	
☐ Set up a business account for water, sewage, trash removal	
Oil City Main Street Program	
217 Elm Street, Oil City PA 16301	
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www.oilcitymainstreet.org	
☐ Inquire about potential locations, funding opportunities & more	
☐ List your business on our online business directory	
☐ Arrange for a grand opening announcement	

Funding, Financing & Other Incentives

☐ Get involved in Main Street revitalization projects

Main Street Façade Grant Improvement Program

- 50/50, reimbursable matching grant for exterior façade improvements on eligible buildings.
- Maximum grant: \$5,000 per building, subject to individual project limits.
- Eligible projects include awnings & canopies, signs, painting, restoration of masonry, woodwork or metals, windows, doors, paint, lighting, and design assistance.
- All projects require advance approval by Main Street Design Committee, Steering Committee, and City Council.

Contact Kathy Bailey, Main Street Manager at (814) 677-3152 x 101 or kbailey@oilregion.org for application and program guidelines.

Oil City Façade Improvement Loan Program: The City of Oil City offers a low interest small loan program to businesses/building owners wishing to update or improve their facades. This loan can be used as match for a Main Street Façade Improvement Grant. Contact Kristin Arendash, (814) 678-3018, for more information.

Anchor Building Loan Program: Qualified developers considering a major rehabilitation of large historic downtown Oil City building may be eligible for an anchor building loan. This program is subject to approval of a grant through Pennsylvania DCED.

- Buildings of 10,000 s.f. or greater, must be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (many downtown buildings are already included in the Oil City historic district listings)
- Building must be currently vacant or underutilized. The project must show job creation and/or retention.
- 30% of project costs, up to \$500,000. Developer must show proof of matching funds and/or other funding sources.
- Acquisition/purchase of the building, interior/exterior renovation costs, site development are among the eligible activities.
- Loan terms & interest rate are TBD.
- Developer's plans must be submitted with the grant application; if approved then funds may be loaned out to the developer. Qualified developers may inquire with Kathy Bailey at (814) 677-3152 x 101 or kbailey@oilregion.org.

Other Lending Sources

Lender	Contact	Type of Loans	Range
The Northwest Commission	Amanda Slider	Revolving Loan Funds for 50% of	\$35,000 -
395 Seneca Street	Loan Program Manager	project costs for business expansion	\$200,000
Oil City, PA 16301	(814) 677-4800 x 115	projects	
http://northwestpa.org/busines	amandas@northwestpa.org		
s-financing/			
The Progress Fund	David Kahley	Tourism-related businesses such as	\$20,000 -
425 W. Pittsburgh Street	President & CEO	restaurants, retail, outfitters, canoe	\$750,000
Greensburg, PA 15601	(724) 216-9160	rentals, bed & breakfasts, inns,	, ,
www.progressfund.org	dkahley@progressfund.org	wineries, breweries, coffee shops, etc.	
Builden Conital	T.I. King Loop Officer	CDA Misusland (under ¢25 000)	
Bridgeway Capital	T.J. King, Loan Officer	SBA Microloan (under \$35,000)	Under \$35,000
1001 State Street, Suite 1400	(814) 451-1171		
Erie, PA 16501	tking@bridgewaycapital.org		
www.bridgewaycapital.org			
Oil Region Alliance	Deb Lutz	Route 8 & 62 Corridor Revolving Loan	\$5,000 - \$50,000
217 Elm Street	(814) 677-3152 x 115	Fund: preserving/renovating buildings	
Oil City, PA 16301	dlutz@oilregion.org	or eligible businesses along the	
www.oilregion.org		corridor, machinery & equipment	
		purchases, working capital.	

Tax Incentives:

Oil City LERTA (Local Economic Revitalization Tax Assistance):

You may be entitled to a property tax exemption on your contemplated alteration or new construction of deteriorated industrial, commercial or other business property. The LERTA provides tax forgiveness on the assessed value of the improvements for up to 10 years (100% the first year sliding to 0% in year 10). Must be filed with the City of Oil City at the time a building or alteration permit is secured. Contact the City of Oil City Code Enforcement Office at 814-678-3003.

Federal & State Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credits:

Federal and state tax credits are available to encourage private investment in the rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties such as office buildings, rental housing, hotels, bed and breakfasts, and retail stores. Contact the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC): Scott Doyle at (717) 783-6012 or midoyle@pa.gov, or Karen Arnold at (717) 783-9927 or kaarnold@pa.gov, or visit mailto:midoyle@pa.gov, or visit program/2646.

Oil City Demographics (2012 Estimates)

Oil City, PA	5-Minute Drive	15-Minute Drive	30-Minute Drive
Population	9,200	21,133	54,954
Avg. HH Income	\$38,984	\$43,316	\$46,187
Avg. Age	39.9	41.1	41.5
Median Home Values	\$56,297	\$68,886	\$77,872

Source: Claritas/Nielsen for Pennsylvania Downtown Center, 2012

Other Resources

Local Media

Company Name	Media Name	Website/Email	Phone
	WKQW 96.3 FM &	www.venangocountydailynews.com	(814) 676-8254
	Venango County Daily		
	News		
Forever Broadcasting	Froggy 98.5 FM & 100.3	www.froggyfun.com	
	FM		
Venango Newspapers	Oil City Derrick &	www.thederrick.com	(814) 676-7444
	Franklin News Herald		
Explore Venango	Explore Venango	www.explorevenango.com	(888) 485-1011
Thomas Media	Venango Weekender	www.freevenangonews.com	(800) 755-8073

Volunteer and Community/Network Opportunities

One of the best ways to build your business is to network with neighboring business, attend downtown and community meetings and functions, and volunteer with community organizations. Here's a few of the opportunities to consider:

Oil City Main Street Program

217 Elm Street Oil City, PA 16301 www.oilcitymainstreet.org

FLEX - Future Leaders & Entrepreneurs **Exchange (Young Professionals)**

41 Main Street Oil City, PA 16301 www.venangochamber.org/chamber/flex/

Venango Area Chamber of Commerce

Susan Williams, Executive Director 41 Main Street Oil City, PA 16301 (814) 676-8521 www.venangochamber.org

Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & **Tourism**

John Phillips, Executive Director 217 Elm Street Oil City, PA 16301 (814) 677-3152 www.oilregion.org

Oil City Arts & Cultural Commission

c/o Oil City Community Development Dept. 21 Seneca Street Oil City, PA 16301 (814) 678-3017 Attn: Kelly Amos www.ocartscouncil.com

Summary

We hope this guide has been helpful and that we've answered some of your questions. For more information, or to update us on your program's resources, please contact:

Kathy Bailey Main Street Manager **Oil City Main Street Program** 217 Elm Street Oil City, PA 16301 (814) 677-3152 x 101 (814) 677-5206 fax kbailev@oilregion.org www.oilcitymainstreet.org

