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## **East Providence's commercial loan program's strong record serving the city's food services industry - by James Moran**

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East Providence

The city's economic development commercial loan program has a long history of assisting both existing and startup businesses in the city, with considerable success in supporting nearly every category of commercial development over the years. Loans have been procured for a variety of commercial uses including office and retail development, industrial warehouse projects, service industries and even recent funding to assist in the development of a new commercial aquatics facility in East Providence (Pods Swimming).

One category of commercial loan assistance that has been particularly prevalent in recent years has been the city's successful efforts in providing startup loans to recipients in the food and beverage/dining services industry. Typically, those seeking financing for independent restaurant startups from commercial lending institutions are unable to secure funding due to the generally high risk associated with the establishment and successful long term operation of restaurant uses. Commercial lending institution's underwriting guidelines are usually averse to restaurant related loans due to this inherent high default risk associated with new restaurant startups. In many instances, potential restaurant startups struggle to secure adequate financing to establish their business and achieve their dream of operating a successful restaurant. In other instances, banks may be open to providing a portion of the financing but are seeking additional equity from other lending sources to move forward with the funding of a loan.

The city's Economic Development Commission in recent years, has provided financial assistance to a number of successful restaurants in the city and having done so, created jobs and brought new options for city dining to the residents of East Providence and beyond. Within the past few years the commission has approved loans for a variety of successful restaurants and food and beverage related businesses. Avenue N Restaurant, Lucky's Tavern, Uncle Tony's Pizza and Pasta, Borealis Coffee and Proud Mary's Donut Shop are several examples of loans that have been approved by the Economic Development Commission that have led to new investment and economic opportunity in our city. The city welcomes discussion with interested parties who may be considering establishing a restaurant business in our city and for any business seeking information on our economic development programs and services that support economic investment in our city.

Those interested in learning more about the economic development activities occurring in East Providence are encouraged to visit the city's economic development website at [www.eastprovidencebusiness.com](http://www.eastprovidencebusiness.com) or the city's Waterfront District website at [www.eastprovidencewaterfront.com](http://www.eastprovidencewaterfront.com) or contact the Department of Planning.

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