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## Highland DDA offering two kinds of business grants

by Brooke Meier

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The Highland Township Downtown Development Authority (DDA) is offering a series of grants to businesses in the historic Highland Station district to spur business and improve to the overall look of the area.

Two types of grants are available to business owners.

The first, a facade grant, is for businesses that wish to improve the exterior of their buildings, whether through new windows, siding, or paint.

The second, a signage grant, is for businesses that want to invest in signs that compliment the historic character of the area.

Both grants are matching grants.

Tim Colbeck, executive director of the DDA, said the facade grant can match up to \$5,000 and the signage grant can match up to \$1,500.

The money comes from tax increment financing (TIF) funds set aside each year by the DDA specifically for the grants.

Colbeck said there is no deadline to apply for the grants; however, the DDA can only give out grants for the amount of money set aside each year. Once the money is gone the grants are gone.

"This year we are giving out three of the facade grants and three of the sign grants. The grants are available until those are used up," he said.

Any improvements funded through the grants must meet township zoning standards, as well as the DDA historic vision standards. The grant money can't be used to perform general repair, structural improvements, habitable work or to meet codes to occupy a building. Grants also will not be made to government-owned properties or tenants in government-owned properties.

To receive a grant a business must submit an application, checklist and required materials to the DDA office, where the staff will receive the application. If approved, a design committee will make a recommendation for approval to the DDA board and township Planning Commission.

"We are hoping to grease the wheels by making money available," Colbeck said. "It's to spur the redevelopment of the historic flavor of our downtown district."

"There's been a real desire on the part of the property owners in the district to see improvements and this is one more opportunity for people who want to do something to encourage them to do so with the funding they can receive, along with the support they will receive from the DDA," said Township Supervisor Tricia Pilchowski.

More information on the grants can be found at the newly improved DDA web site at [www.highlanddda.com](http://www.highlanddda.com).