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BUSINESS

# Browns buy back buildings, look to expand Troy operations

Pioneer Bank provided capital, guidance to help family business grow

 **Larry Rulison**  
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From left, owner Garry Brown and his daughters Abby Brown and Nora Brown are seen with Tara Toomajian and Jesse Tomczak of Pioneer Bank in Brown's Malt Room on Wednesday, April 5, 2023 in Troy, N.Y.

Lori Van Buren/Times Union

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TROY — The story of Brown's Brewing Co. in Troy has always been about beer, but in many ways, the rise and popularity of Brown's has always been in its spaces, its real estate.

It all started in the 1990s when Garry and Kelly Brown, purchased the two buildings on River Street that would become Brown's Troy Taproom and Brewery and Revolution Hall, a private event and concert space.

In 2006, the married couple sold the buildings to a Manhattan investor to finance the development of their North Hoosick brewery and taproom facility. But now, with daughters Nora and Abby having become more involved in the day-to-day operations of the business — and with the realization that the company's buildings have been vastly underused, the Browns have repurchased the River Street buildings.

"We worked with the SBA and did a loan and partnership with the SBA for him (back in 2006) to purchase that property and renovate it and make it the brewery and purchase all the equipment," said Tara Toomajian, a commercial relationship manager with Pioneer Bank. "We were part of all that financing, which really made it possible for them to be able to brew the amount of beer that they brew now and sell in other states."

Back then, Pioneer's headquarters were in Troy. And through it all — including the move of Pioneer's headquarters to Colonie — Pioneer has had a close relationship with Brown's Brewing that goes beyond just the financing. The bank staff also has helped nurture the business and the Browns.

"What I'll say from a strategic perspective is that we're all in with Browns," said Jesse Tomczak, Pioneer's chief banking officer. "As a banking partner, we believe in character, integrity, work — work ethic. Garry and his family, they're a perfect profile of a client that we partner with. To us, it's about the partnership, it's about the relationship."

The upgrades in Troy will include the possibility of building apartments on the upper floors at River Street that could be used as rooms for wedding parties so family and friends don't have to go far the night of the wedding. The deck space in Troy will also be redone and doubled in size. Brown has already hired an architect to come up with designs and ideas for the extra space.

Garry Brown says working with a local bank instead of a national bank may sound old-fashioned, but he thinks there is a lot of value in working with someone you know personally.

"That meant a lot to me. 'Cause we went with some different banks over the years, but when we got working with Pioneer, and they were, you know, at the time, right down Second Street, you could walk there," he said. "And that to me, being a local business, and trying to tell everybody it's local beer. Everything we do is local, local, local. You've got to live it, right?"

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