Becoming a City Center Champion* was an easy decision. I see Corry as a city of promise with great potential in its amazing people full of heart, buildings which are waiting to come back to life, and lush parks and trails. (*City Center focus includes the bike trail head on Route 426/Center Street to the city building and several blocks on either side of Center Street throughout that section.)

I kept envisioning an art gallery in downtown Corry but knew that would be a difficult business to make profitable. But the vision wouldn't leave, so I began working in an art gallery in another community, studied business models, read books on business, gallery relationships and attended a seminar by a gallery owner located in an art mecca. I chose a name, Painted Finch Gallery, Inc., contacted artists, designed the logo, business cards and cabinets to showcase artwork, had them built, acquired architectural finds, drew up the floor plans and purchased equipment. I knew I needed to be in historic downtown Corry but the building I wanted was occupied so in 2012 we rented space on Route 6 and, while we had a great location, we were having a hard time branding it as a destination.

After 3 years we moved to my dream building and our current location in the downtown. We immediately began getting the walk-in traffic we were missing in the previous location. In 2016, we shop owners in the downtown banded together to start themed “First Fridays” featuring local musical talent and a unique shopping experience. We began to attract locals who hadn’t shopped in the downtown in years. Sales began to increase. Downtown Corry Business Association was born and we started advertising our shops and events with a couple of television stations. We saw a huge leap in foot traffic and sales. In 2017 we opened our second shop, Epiphany’s Emporium, in the other half of my building. The artisan gifts and old fashioned bottled sodas were an immediate hit. The year 2020 was interesting for all of us and full of unexpected surprises. Some of the best were three new shops opening up and our downtown merchants did very well once we were able to reopen. Thank you for supporting your local small businesses.

Corry has had a highly determined and creative past, full of risk and dreams that spawned oil refineries, inventions such as Climax trains that could pull heavy loads up hill and out of the woods, stump pulling machines, corsets, typewriters, many patents and an opera star. It couldn’t have been easy to pitch a tent and build in a swamp, saw down massive trees by hand, create bricks for buildings, dig basements, lay railroad track across hills, streams and ravines. Early Corrians chose to create solutions for the difficulties they faced. I believe that heritage helps us chart both our present and the future of Corry. We currently have an opportunity to create the changes that redefine our destiny.

People ask me, “Why an art gallery in Corry, PA?” And I reply, “Why not?” I thoroughly believe we, Corry, are poised for a renaissance. Through hard work and collaborative efforts, historic downtown Corry is becoming a destination. I believe Corry itself can become the place to come, work and play and choose to stay. “Why not?”

I would encourage everyone to find one of the five areas of the strategic plan that you can become a part of and volunteer to help us transform Corry into the amazing place that it can be.

Thank you!
#PositivelyCorry,WendyNeckers