

# The Star Press

May 13, 2009

## Buyout could mean 75 jobs

Officials from Monogram Food Solutions announced that they have completed their purchase of Al Pete Meats.

By **KEITH ROYSDON**

*kroysdon@muncie.gannett.com*

Local food producer sold, adding jobs

MUNCIE -- As the sale of a longtime local food producer to a Tennessee-based company becomes final, officials are predicting continued local expansion and job growth. As many as 75 new local jobs could be created through the expansion of Al Pete Meats, said officials of Monogram Food Solutions, a growing food products company.

Al Pete Meats -- a decades-old company that makes more than 70,000 corn dogs a day locally, in addition to Pete's Pride pork fritters -- has been operated by Monogram since mid-2008. Monogram recently announced that the sale has become final.

Along with the additional jobs comes an increased annual payroll, which the company said will reach about \$20 million within three years.

About 40 unionized workers making an average of \$9 an hour worked at the plant in mid-2008.

Karl Schledwitz, chairman and CEO of Monogram, said in a statement that the company was "delighted to be a part of the Muncie community and it is our goal to keep the Pete's Pride brand and grow it along with other meat brands."

Elizabeth Rowray, vice president for technology advancement for the Muncie-Delaware County Economic Development Alliance, said the growth of companies like Monogram/Al Pete was crucial to communities.

"Economic developers are quick to point out that 85 percent of all jobs in a community are a direct result of an existing company that expands," Rowray said. "In our office, we celebrate an addition of three or five or 10 jobs like we celebrate a company coming to town and producing 500 jobs."

Monogram was founded in 2004 in Memphis, Tenn., and has grown through acquisitions, including Trail's Best Meat Snacks from Sara Lee Corporation. The company's products include Jeff Foxworthy Jerky. Monogram employs more than 225 people in Tennessee and Minnesota.

The local company was founded by Al Pete, who died in 1971. Longtime company owner John Hartmeyer remains as a consultant to Monogram and acquired stock in the company.



Joe Patterson loads hot dogs onto a conveyor belt where they will be dipped in batter and then deep fried and turned into corn dogs at Al Pete Meats. The business was bought by Monogram Food Solutions, which intends to hire more people. (THE STAR PRESS FILE PHOTO)