

## Meet the meat masters

As vegans munch profits of many purveyors, LaFrieda Wholesale Meats grows and counts on VisionTec Solutions

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Photo courtesy LaFrieda Wholesale Meats

The LaFrieda team, left to right, Mark Pastore, COO; Pat LaFrieda Sr., founder; and Pat LaFrieda Jr., CEO, have built a meat empire in New York and New Jersey with an avid following.

Pat LaFrieda is a perfectionist-purveyor of meats in New York City. He's a third-generation family business owner and the chief executive officer of LaFrieda Wholesale Meats, a firm with a following that includes some of the finest restaurants, hotels and retail outlets in the Tri-State area and beyond.

Drive to the company's headquarters in the Meat Packing District of Manhattan and you'll see proof of the mark they've made-below the street name is the honorary moniker: Pat LaFrieda Lane. The company's growth has been notable even during a time when meat eaters have declined and vegetarians and vegans surged. Recently it built a new meat butchering and processing plant in nearby North Bergen, N.J. For the security and surveillance, LaFrieda turned to go-to integrator VisionTec Solutions, Long Island, headed by Ralph Tisei, president.

Tisei said owner LaFrieda demands excellence from his own company and its personnel and also, from his security solution provider. "He's a business owner who understands the importance and value of security at his operations," said Tisei. "And he needed more than just static CCTV cameras; he needed an intelligent video management system integral to the ongoing security and continuity of the nearly 100-year-old institution," he added.

Like others in the food service industry, the company is heavily regulated and federally inspected by the USDA. As such, it must meet stringent requirements and regulations for quality control in processing and packaging. In fact, USDA agents have an office in the LaFrieda building, literally hands on in ensuring products the company ships meet current requirements and guidelines. The business is 24/7 and butchers, who are required to prepare meat only in the evenings, begin the night before each business day so orders are processed and ready to ship early the next morning.

"We needed technology that could help us achieve our goals and grow with us," said Mark Pastore, vice president and chief operating officer of LaFrieda Meats. "We had relied on VisionTec Solutions in the past and they came through and delivered a system we could see would be a good return on investment for us and boost our capabilities at the plant."

Currently VisionTec is working with LaFrieda on deploying GPS technology to improve the effectiveness of its delivery routing and the efficiency of its drivers and overall operations.

VisionTec Solutions worked at the company's Manhattan location and knew that its focus on high-resolution megapixel technology and video analytics would be a handy addition to LaFrieda's New Jersey operations-and offer much more than traditional security.

"They are the 'rock stars' of meat right now," continued Tisei. "They do tremendous amounts of business, including unique custom blends. Pat LaFrieda is very big on security. We needed to control where employees were at and at what time. We needed extremely high-resolution cameras and coverage throughout."

### The mother of all coolers

Working for a specialty company such as LaFrieda had its challenges. The temperature is 30 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit in most areas and the high humidity was also critical to their operations, but a consideration in camera selection.

However, VisionTec was able to get in on the ground floor prior to construction, which made it easier to custom spec the job. "We used the highest quality cameras on the market at the time of the installation," Tisei said. "They have full control, viewing all video on two 46-inch and one 23-inch display so they can see what's going on. They can easily retrieve live video to verify that processes and procedures are being followed. Audio/video intercoms and access control were also part of the specification."

One of the big issues was outdoor cameras, because of the nature of the facility. "We had to mount cameras and seal them to an uneven facade and ensure no ingress of water existed. The waterproof ceiling consisted of six inches of foam as well." Cameras include motion detection circuitry and NVRs feature up to two months storage using H.264 compression algorithms. "We heavily tweaked the system to get it to meet the user's needs."

Megapixel cameras have also been deployed to assist in quality control-watching the butchering room so knives and utensils are cleaned and handled properly. Refrigerated trucks, some 13, get a watchful eye with megapixel cameras. High-resolution cameras are also deployed over weighing scales and other processing and packaging rooms and at the end of each aisle so packers can verify the client's order via video. A dedicated server was installed and personnel can log in remotely to view cameras via the T1 communications line.

"The client was unfamiliar with megapixel technology and what it could bring to their facility," Tisei continued. "We have a breakdown of the different megapixel cameras and can crop an image accordingly to let the customer see the size and clarity differences between different resolutions. They could see the ROI in plain sight and were able to maximize their return on investment, and also, grow the technology easily in the future."

There's nothing that beats expertise in megapixel technology and other solutions presented to the customer in a way in which they can understand. When an integrator can show ROI and the flexibility to grow, the customer most often will agree with a hardy nod of the head and signature on paper.

### EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS

Here's what VisionTec installed at LaFrieda Wholesale Meats:

- 12 Arecont 2155 2 megapixel cameras
- 15 Arecont 1355 1.3 megapixel cameras
- NUUO 27-channel NVR software
- 1 custom built 5 Terabyte Intel server
- 2 16-channel Altronix power supplies
- 4 Door-Hartmann Controls access control panel and software
- 3 Rutherford Controls (RCI) 6 Series commercial duty electronic strikes
- 1 RCI 0 Series RIM style commercial duty electronic strike
- Aiphone JK Series audio/video intercoms
- 2 Sharp 46-in. LCD Screens
- 1 Acer 23-in. LCD Screen

