

MORRISON MEAT PIES



HOSTED BY
Utah State University,
Logan SBDC

Utah State
UNIVERSITY

Morrison Meat Pies, a Utah-born food manufacturer received a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and matching funds from the Utah Pork Producers Association (UPPA) for a project that launched in April 2012. The USDA project is aimed at producing new value added pork products for wholesale distribution in the Intermountain West and for Export to South Korea.

OWNERS
Susan & Eugene Tafoya

First established in 1883, Morrison has been in business for over 120 years providing high quality, healthy and tasty pies. Gene Tafoya, one of the present day co-owners was born and raised next to the original Morrison plant in Salt Lake City. As a child, Gene frequently visited the plant for breakfast for their tasty and broken pie pieces that were given to him by the company's staff. In 2004, Gene and his wife Susan Tafoya acquired Morrison from the previous owners who were struggling to keep the company alive. The opportunity appealed to the Tafoya's because Gene had extensive experience in sales and was looking for a change from working in the corporate world.

SECRET TO SUCCESS

"Our network: the relationship we have with UPPA, our distribution channels, and the SBDC."

– Susan Tafoya, Co-Owner

NATURE OF BUSINESS
Food Manufacturer

CITY
West Jordan

To advance the business and increase sales and distribution, Gene utilized his extensive background in sales to transform Morrison. The Tafoya's upgraded the facilities, added an automation system to their pie production and enhanced their technology to include a new website and use of an Electronic Data Interchange system (EDI), a useful tool that allows the Tafoya's to work more efficiently with grocery store chains. The Tafoya's also worked on adding items to the menu of pies and updated the packaging and logo to appeal to the bigger grocery store chains.

COUNTY
Salt Lake

PHONE
(801) 967-0188

Collaborative partnerships have also helped the Tafoya's grow, including their partnership with UPPA—a collaboration that helped Morrison to receive the grant by the USDA. Dr. Haven Hendricks, Executive Director of UPPA and former faculty member at Utah State University (USU) has been a vital partner for Morrison Meat Pies. Dr. Hendricks helped the Tafoya's connect with USU's food science department, which provided the company a hazard analysis, reviewed their safety and sanitation procedures, and provided the nutritional label analyses.

WEBSITE
morrisonmeatpies.com

BUSINESS STRUCTURE
LLC

Dr. Hendricks also introduced the Tafoya's to the Utah Small Business Development Center located in Logan for business counseling. An expert business advisor at the SBDC helped the Tafoya's with a feasibility study, a cash flow analysis, financial projections and provided recommendations and assistance for additional funding and capital to increase product distribution. "A big challenge for a business like ours is getting the funding to produce value-added products," said Gene. "The SBDC provided us the tools we needed to gain access to that funding that comes thru the USDA."

BUSINESS BEGAN
February 2004

EMPLOYEES
12

"The Tafoya's are excellent examples of successful entrepreneurs. They took a business that was going downhill and turned it into a growing and successful company through innovative approaches to product, market, and funding."

– Franklin Prante, Logan SBDC Director.

SBDC CONSULTANT
Frank Prante

The USDA grant will allow Morrison Meat Pies to introduce several new products to the market, including an egg and bacon breakfast pie, a barbeque pork pie and a specialty pie for export to Korea. The new value added pork production line will be distributed to grocery store chains throughout the state and across the country and will also be sold in specialty stores, state fairs, farmers markets and a variety of events. With this expansion, the Tafoya's project that sales will increase by over 100% in 2012 and that they will be hiring several new employees to accommodate the growth.

Morrison's increased distribution channels to US and international markets as a result of the USDA grant are an asset to the state of Utah through increased job opportunities and increased sales tax revenues. The collaborative partnerships and innovative practices initiated by the Tafoya's have certainly helped Morrison Meat Pies to survive, live and thrive in today's highly competitive food market.