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# PROVISIONER®

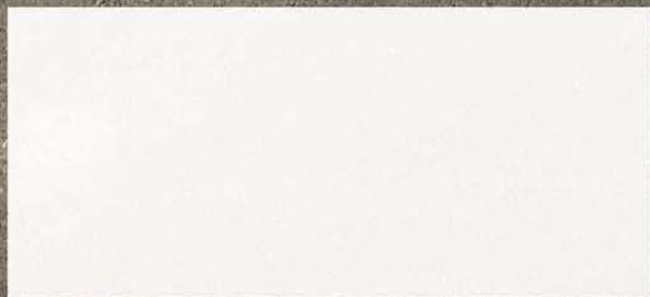
SERVING MEAT, POULTRY, AND PREPARED FOODS PROCESSORS



# Great expectations

**WLF** *West Liberty Foods*

Michael Quint, Vice President Sales & Marketing  
Glenn Elzey, Senior Vice President & Chief Financial Officer  
Gerald Lessard, Vice President & Chief Operating Officer  
Ed Garrett, President & CEO





# Great expectations

**F**ar too often in business, hype surpasses substance. Every new consumer product is the next great thing and every new piece of equipment promises to revolutionize the industry. If these types of accolades are regularly lauded on products and equipment, the buzz is exponentially greater for brand new processing facilities. Since 2005, *The National Provisioner* has chronicled the development of West Liberty Foods' Tremonton,

Utah, facility, and after getting a front-and-center, in-person tour of the new plant, we can safely say West Liberty's newest gem lives up to the hype.

On a pleasant, albeit windy, Tuesday morning in early August, West Liberty Foods' management, their equipment partners, their food-service and retail partners, state, local, and federal representatives and other invited guests gathered for the official ribbon cutting and opening of

Tremonton.

"This is a dream realized for us at West Liberty Foods," Ed Garrett, West Liberty Foods' CEO told *The National Provisioner*. "The goal all along was to usher in a new era of modern innovation and to create the most modern processing facility in the world. We've accomplished that."

Lofty expectations, but necessary ones, especially when dealing with the caliber of customer with which



**WEST LIBERTY FOODS'** new 200,000-square-foot western outpost in Tremonton, Utah, is all that it is cracked up to be.

BY THE NATIONAL PROVISIONER STAFF  
PHOTOS BY BLAIR KUNZ

West Liberty Foods deals. The day began with an announcement that West Liberty Foods had received the Presidential Award for being Subway's Vendor of the Year.

West Liberty Foods had been servicing its Subway business from its Iowa facility. However, that facility was running close to capacity, with output running between 83 to 90 percent. West Liberty was in the unenviable position of having its demand outweigh its supply. Moving west

was strategic and choosing Tremonton, Utah, may have been divine.

"No joke, I prayed long and hard for West Liberty to come here to Tremonton," Tremonton Mayor Max Weese explained. "They made their initial visit here, and I knew that we were the right city for them."

Garrett, for his part, returned the compliment, saying city and state officials made West Liberty's team feel right at home, despite some

early challenges to the process.

"One of the initial setbacks was in the choice of location we initially decided on in Utah," Garrett said. "The site turned out to have previously undiscovered wetlands impacts."

Once those challenges were addressed, Garrett said, Tremonton was an easy choice. "Once the direction led us to Tremonton, city and state officials showed us why we should build in Tremonton. It was

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## COVER STORY

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easy to feel at home in their city.”

Weese agrees that the fit between processor and town is a very good one.

“There are wonderful people in this town and they look forward to working for West Liberty,” he said. “It is a great way of life here in Utah, and I look forward to sharing that with West Liberty.”

### Strategic partnerships

Once West Liberty Foods decided on where to build they turned their focus on which equipment suppliers to partner with. The design/engineering team made it a point to challenge their equipment suppliers to offer design solutions to create premium products in an efficient production environment.

West Liberty Foods had capacity goals in mind (1.6 million pounds per week with space to increase to 2.5 million pounds per week) but they were open-minded enough to listen to ideas from their suppliers.

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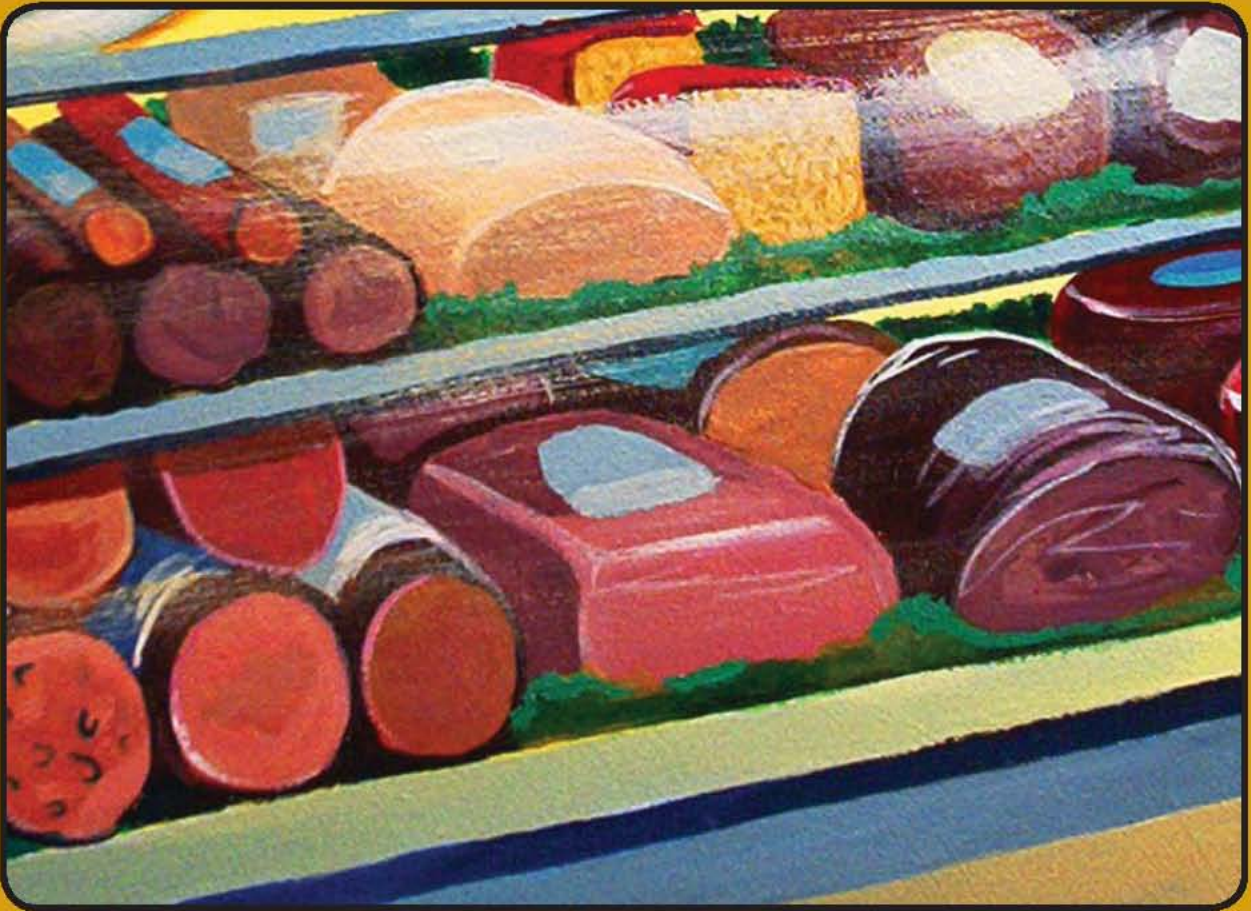
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# WLF West Liberty Foods

"The experience working with our equipment suppliers in the building of Tremonton was really unique," Don Flint, West Liberty Foods

mechanical supervisor relayed during the plant tour. "We went to the various equipment suppliers and said, 'Here is the challenge, what solution

to you have for it?" Then we worked to incorporate their solutions into what our plans were."

West Liberty then did what is almost unthinkable, partnering different equipment suppliers with one another so they could collaborate on design efficiencies. Garrett said that it was quite the experience having competing equipment suppliers gather in a room to work on a common solution.

"They had to come up with solutions to any potential problems they foresaw, as West Liberty Foods was the first meat-processing company in the United States to incorporate 10-foot logs into plant operations, apart from the standard six-foot logs," Garrett explained.

Another unorthodox, but ultimately

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## COVER STORY

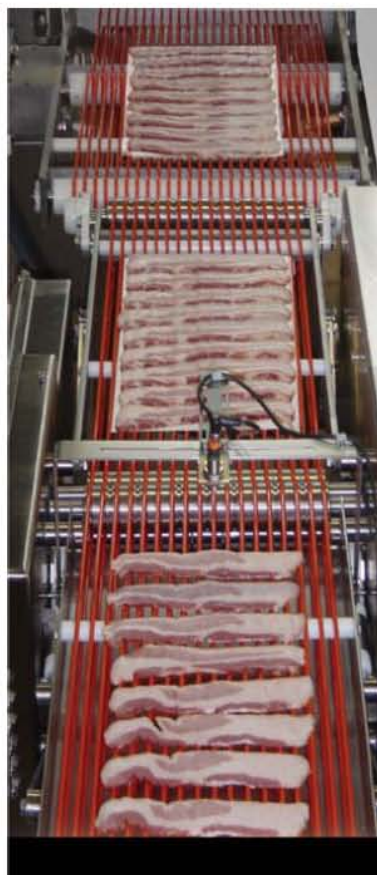
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successful approach to facility design, was that the Tremonton team surveyed internally at West Liberty to see where they could improve. Three results of that survey include an on-site day-care facility, raised ceilings in the 10 automated slicing rooms and a variable lighting system. Any room at Tremonton can be lighted to either mimic the lighting in a restaurant or at a retail store, with the logic behind this that the production team can view the products through customer eyes.

The facility astonishes with its many processing advancements and employee-friendly innovations under one roof. To make a difference in the present and the future, it was vital to design a facility with the best interests of their customers and the employees in mind. West Liberty knows that its two most important assets are those two groups — make these people happy and success will follow.


*Continued on page 72*



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### A look at technology

The plant opening also featured an in-depth look at the information technology being utilized at Tremonton. Dave McDowell, West Liberty Foods' head of IT boasted that this is the most technically advanced processing facility in North America and how much of a pleasure it was to create a technology infrastructure from the ground up. McDowell was also quick to demonstrate West Liberty Foods' RFID technology.

"There is the walk-versus-talk mentality when it comes to RFID and its role in improving supply chain efficiencies," says McDowell.

"However, at Tremonton, all products are tagged, which gives us exact information at any time as to our inventory levels and where our products are in our distribution center. This helps us manage our process but as important it helps us communicate with our customers."

Doing things for the customer was at the center of all design/operational decisions made at Tremonton. "It was food sale demands from our customers that fueled this expansion, so it makes sense that we put them front and center in our mind in all aspects of operation here at Tremonton," says Garrett.

To that end, Tremonton will process a dazzling array of products to meet any customer needs. Tremonton will be processing sliced deli meats, cheese, fully-cooked chicken (including chicken strips), wings, roasted chicken and roasted turkey, and grilled chicken products (fajitas), with the opportunity to expand to more products, depending on customer demand.

What the customer wants is a mantra that pervades every aspect of West Liberty Foods and the Tremonton facility. It is this mantra that has led to the success of West Liberty and what will lead to the ultimate success of their Utah facility. **NP**

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