

# Closure of Birds Eye Foods' local headquarters will result in loss of 205 jobs

Jim Stinson • Staff writer • March 5, 2010

Birds Eye Foods' headquarters at the Linden Oaks office park in Brighton is being closed and consolidated into the offices of a sister company in New Jersey. The move will cost 205 Rochester-area jobs, according to paperwork filed with the state.

Birds Eye, a legendary frozen food brand, was acquired in December by Blackstone Group, a New York City investment giant, for \$1.3 billion. Blackstone already owned Pinnacle Foods Group LLC, and is folding Birds Eye's corporate operations into Pinnacle.

Pinnacle notified the New York Department of Labor that the Monroe County headquarters would be closing. Notification was required by New York's Workers Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act, known as the WARN Act.

The notification indicated 205 employees would be affected, and that the layoffs would take place between May 31 and Dec. 31.

Although consolidation of corporate headquarters functions is typical after an acquisition, the move was met with dismay by Rochester-area business leaders. Ellen Rosen, vice president of communications at the Rochester Business Alliance, said New York might have had a better chance of keeping Birds Eye if the state's tax environment weren't so poor.

Before the December deal, Blackstone Group already was a big player in the processed food world. Pinnacle Foods, based in Mountain Lakes, N.J., makes and distributes products ranging from Duncan Hines baking mixes to Vlasic pickles.

In Birds Eye, Blackstone acquired the nation's

leading frozen vegetables company. The Birds Eye brand is No. 1 with a 26.5 percent market share.

Birds Eye employed 1,700 people nationwide in late 2009. Its New York holdings are the corporate headquarters and a 255,000-square-foot plant and warehouse in Fulton, Oswego County, which wasn't mentioned in the WARN filing.

Pinnacle Foods officials did not respond to a message seeking comment late Thursday.

JFSTINSO@DemocratandChronicle.com

Advertisement



## Mom Dilemma #36:

Your daughter insists on wearing her princess costume to the grocery store. Allow it or not?

YES, at least she's dressed!

NO, I have some rules!

momlike.me.com  
where Local moms meet