



Chris McMurrugh, Plant Manager Tyson

Sedalia
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41,000. That's how many Missourians work in food processing. Given the state's low energy costs, generous water resources, transportation network and supply chain, it's no wonder the industry thrives here. Chris McMurrugh manages the Tyson complex in Sedalia, Missouri. He talks about operating a mega-business in a small town.

"We have a fully-cooked and ready-to-cook business here, processing almost one million chickens a week into filets, strips, tenders, chunks, and popcorn chicken. We have a very robust product mix.

"We also have vendors that supply packaging in the Missouri area. And we utilize distribution centers. Our proximity to Kansas City, St. Louis, Columbia, and Springfield gives us quick access to vendors, customers and contractors. We're geographically set in the center of that metropolitan axis.

"What I like about Missouri is the local and state support of manufacturing. And the economic development contribution is tremendous, whether it's through manufacturing itself or through grants for workforce education. When you don't have that support, you don't realize it's not there, but, when you do have it, it makes doing business in the state very pleasant."

State Fair Community College is a regional asset that many local businesses tap into, and Tyson is no exception.

"State Fair offers continuing education classes that a lot of our team members — managers and hourly alike — participate in. They have done onsite training for us, too. We have a training center that was state funded, and we worked with State Fair when that got started.

"There's a lot of training centered around food manufacturing processes. Part of that goes into cleaning and sterilization, because food safety is the most important part of our business. When you buy a bag of chicken, you want it to be safe for your family. We have our own world-class internal programs to ensure food safety.

With nearly 2,000 employees, Tyson is one of the area's biggest employers, putting almost 10 percent of the Central Missouri region to work each day. "A common theme among our employees is work ethic. Our team members are hard-working Americans who pay taxes and give back to their communities.

"As a manager, I know that 85 to 90 percent of a person's self-worth comes from their job. It's my job to give my employees that 90 percent. That makes me work harder.

"We have heavy involvement in the United Way Relay for Life. We also support local civic organizations through product donations on just about every level. Many of our managers serve on boards or civic organizations that support youth and development of our community. I love our people."

And the Sedalia area? McMurrrough loves that, too.

"I've been with Tyson 14 years, and I've had the opportunity to move around with the company. I've learned that there's plenty to do in every community as long as you're looking for it.

"Every other place we have lived has had things to do, but not the variety of things we've found in Sedalia.

"We have five parks here, several with pools and walking trails and places for kids to play. We also have outstanding schools and educators and robust youth programs. A place that invests in its youth is a wonderful place to be, and Sedalia does that very well.

"We're outdoor enthusiasts in my family. I like to hunt and fish when I have time. And I enjoy running. The Katy Trail (rails to trails bike path) is a mile from my house. I can get out and run as far as I want to, and my girls can ride their bikes. There's a feeling of camaraderie when you're running or you're biking. Everyone's your friend. Everyone's out there doing the same things with their family. The Katy Trail is a hidden treasure. It really is."