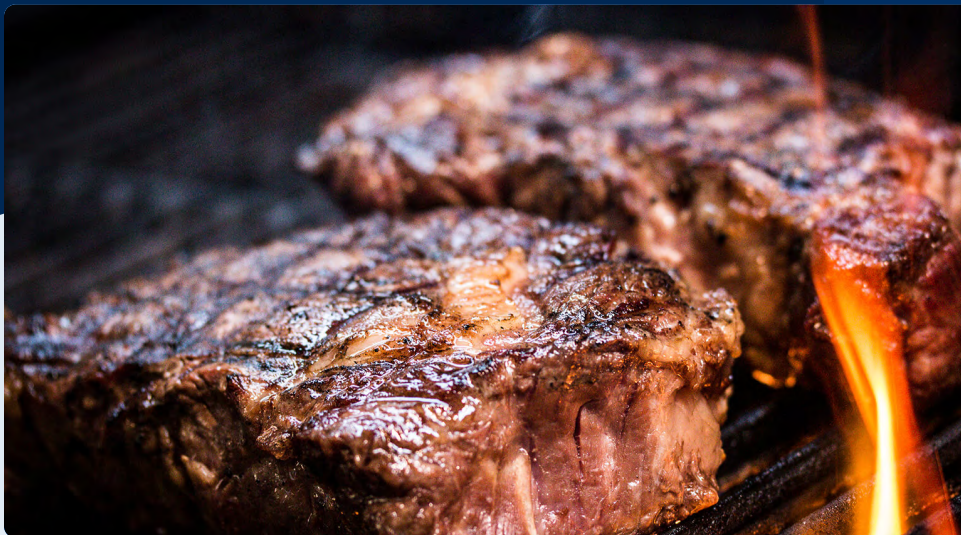


# Increased Demand Requires Expansion and Advanced Technology

**LOCATION**

Austin, Texas

**INDUSTRY**

Food &amp; Beverage

**WEBSITE**[nighthawkfoods.com](https://nighthawkfoods.com)

Greater Austin, TX-based Night Hawk Frozen Foods (Night Hawk) began in 1932 as Night Hawk Steak House, a late-night diner chain. In 1964, however, it shifted its business and became a frozen food manufacturer selling to retail grocery stores throughout Texas. People who enjoyed the diner's famous charbroiled steaks were able to purchase them frozen and ready to cook at home.

## Demand increase

Like all food manufacturers, Night Hawk experienced a tremendous increase in demand during the pandemic. When COVID forced people to eat every meal at home and worry if the grocery store would close, the frozen food market thrived. According to "Power of Frozen in Retail," a February 2021 report from the American Frozen Food Institute, the dollar value of frozen food sales jumped 21% last year and unit sales climbed 13.3%.<sup>1</sup> The report also showed that in late 2020, 57% of consumers were still purchasing more frozen foods, 58% were purchasing different kinds of frozen foods, 57% were purchasing different brands than they did pre-pandemic.<sup>2</sup>



SmartSights WIN-911 software monitors each stage in Night Hawk's sophisticated refrigeration process. This includes the company's state-of-the-art refrigeration system's cooling towers, which remove excess heat and maintain precise temperatures.

Photo Credit: All images provided by Night Hawk

## Growing to meet demand

During the pandemic, Texas families increased their frozen food consumption and freezer capacity. Night Hawk knew they needed to address this situation and quickly adapted to meet demand. The company implemented a full-scale manufacturing expansion, which included a new engine room with added compressors to support the increase in production. Frozen food manufacturing operations is a risky business with temperatures potentially shifting anywhere between 25°C and -30°C. To stay on top of these temperature fluctuations, Night Hawk has a state-of-the-art refrigeration system with a large cooler room that keeps products such as their signature steak sauce and fresh, ready-to-cook ingredients at precise temperatures. The freezer room is equally large with tall ceilings and the capacity to keep finished goods at optimal [frozen] temperatures until they are ready to be shipped.



Seneca's twelve flowlines connect individual wells from the wellhead and bulk test units.

## Ensuring efficiencies and reducing downtime

Ensuring safe and efficient operations is critical to Night Hawk's business. To help reduce maintenance expenses and ensure minimal unplanned equipment downtime, the refrigeration maintenance crew uses Wonderware InTouch software to oversee and manage their control systems hardware. Integrated with this SCADA system is SmartSights WIN-911 remote alarm notification software to continuously monitor the alarms and provide important security updates on the entire refrigeration system.

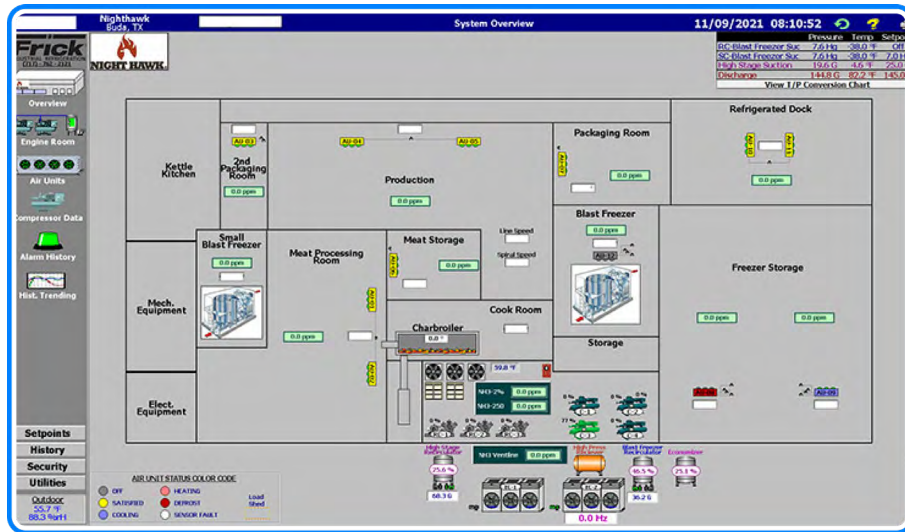
This configuration allows a maintenance technician or engineer to easily see the refrigeration equipment inflows and outflows status via remote view from the main office computers to closely watch temperatures, ammonium levels, and other critical metrics.

When a monitored change occurs, an alarm notification immediately comes through and notifies the crew through email and SMS. Having this information available at a moment's notice is key for Night Hawk's operations. Subtle changes can have serious impacts on their inventory or crew safety if left unattended. The company's refrigeration and maintenance crew are akin to first responders—reacting quickly and effectively to help keep the supply chain secure.

## CASE STUDY

Having access to remote alarm notifications enables the company's refrigeration crew to respond faster to maintenance requirements and keep the supply line set at optimal levels.

The longer it takes plant personnel to respond and repair equipment, the more damaging the interruption.



The Night Hawk maintenance and engineering team can easily see the refrigeration equipment inflows and outflows status via remote view from the main office computers to closely watch temperatures, ammonium levels, and other critical metrics.

## Remote monitoring assists growth

Most recently, Night Hawk successfully increased overall production by 50% using their current control systems and advanced supply chain practices. WIN-911 software played an important role in empowering Night Hawk to effectively scale with consumer and operational demands and reduce any unplanned downtime.

The company has been expanding to meet the rise in demand for frozen products. SmartSights WIN-911 has enhanced its operations and control systems to make the transition easier.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.foodprocessing.com/articles/2021/frozen-food-spike/> (accessed November 17, 2021)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*