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KETTLE CUISINE INVESTS \$25 MILLION IN LYNN

BY GAYLA CAWLEY | August 14, 2018



Congressman Seth Moulton talks with Chloe Merrithew and Josh Godman at the ribbon cutting celebrating the 20 million expansion at Kettle Cuisine. (Owen O'Rourke)

LYNN — Kettle Cuisine, a wholesale soup manufacturer on the Lynnway, celebrated its \$17 million expansion on Tuesday afternoon.

In the last 12 months, the company has spent \$25 million in a capital investment, which has been nearly all processing equipment in preparation for soup season, which coincides with the cold months, Kettle Cuisine CEO Liam McClennon said. Some of the expense has been renovating the new space.

Kettle Cuisine opened its industrial kitchen at 330 Lynnway in 2014 and has seen its workforce grow from 200 employees to about 500, according to McClennon, with about 150 people hired this year. Kettle Cuisine has a local hiring preference, and nearly 70 percent of its employees are from Lynn.

Since opening in Lynn, Kettle Cuisine has invested nearly \$50 million into its 200,000 square-foot facility, which includes the 40,000 square feet of expanded space it moved into at the beginning of the summer, McClennon said.

While celebrating its success, McClennon spoke about how the Trump administration's decision to rescind temporary protected status (TPS) for more than 300,000 citizens from mainly countries in the Caribbean and Central America that have suffered natural disasters could devastate manufacturing in the United States.

McClennon said Kettle Cuisine has approximately 30 employees in its Lynn facility with TPS status, many having been employees for more than 20 years.

"The loss of these employees would be devastating to our business, our community and to their families," McClennon said. "Many TPS holders are well-respected and gainfully employed in the manufacturing sector and rely on manufacturing as a path to the middle class. The lack of entry into America, coupled with America's lowest unemployment in close to 20 years, and the possible rescension of TPS has the potential to cripple US manufacturing."

U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton (D-Mass) took Edenilson Granados, a Salvadoran immigrant and employee of Kettle Cuisine with TPS, to the 2018 State of the Union address. He said Granados is a frontline manager and leader in the facility, which makes him not just a good immigration story, but a good business story. One of the components that goes into having a successful business in Lynn is its policies, he said.

"We have to fix these immigration problems because at the end of the day, they create jobs," Moulton said. "And the best part of the Kettle Cuisine success story is not just the soup that they've made or the money they've made or the investment they're putting into this facility. It's the people ... It's the fact that they are still hiring people right here in Lynn, Massachusetts."

Founded just outside of Boston in 1986, Kettle Cuisine handcrafts small batch, all-natural soups from scratch for restaurants, food service operators, and grocery retailers. The company also has an industrial kitchen in California and calls itself the first coast-to-coast fresh soup supplier in North America.

At the Lynn site, Kettle Cuisine makes 15 million gallons of fresh soup annually, McClennon said.

"We are proud of our growth and development, investment in new equipment, training and developing our people, and our role in creating hundreds of new jobs," McClennon said.