

## Maag Foods Receives Inside Scoop From SBDC



Mark Maag, CEO and founder of Maag Foods, is no stranger to the kitchen. He comes from a family where it is tradition for the men to know how to cook. Four years ago, Mark started working on a special chili bean and beef dip recipe and began taking his creation to parties and other social gatherings. Mark's dip became an instant favorite among his family and friends. He even took the advice of family and friends and made a few recipe changes to perfect his dip. Mark entered his dip into the 2007 Chili Contest organized by the Cancer Patient Services of Hancock County and won 2<sup>nd</sup> place out of 28 contestants, giving him the confidence he needed to begin marketing

his dip.

In December of 2006, Mark met with Craig Brown, a counselor at the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Rhodes State College and Craig assisted him with the process of obtaining approval from the United States Department of Agriculture for MAAG's Chili Bean & Beef Dip, writing a business plan, brainstorming ideas and placing a full color-half page article in the Findlay Courier helping Mark increase business drastically. Mark's early

batches of dip were only 400 pounds, but as business increased; his batch size increased to 2,500 pounds. Craig also invited Mark to be part of a business marketing and research class project at the University of Findlay. Craig and Mark worked with the Business Research class in spring of 2007 and by the end of the project; Mark had a complete marketing plan for MAAG's Chili Bean & Beef Dip. As part of the marketing plan, Maag Foods has also developed a Web site, [www.maagfoods.com](http://www.maagfoods.com)

Mark currently has 12 stores in 4 counties (Allen, Putnam, Hancock and Hardin) selling MAAG's Chili Bean & Beef Dip and has plans to add six additional stores in early 2008. Mark suggests that new entrepreneurs begin making connections early and contact an SBDC for guidance on how to get started. "Being an entrepreneur is like walking from point A to point B with no lights on, but the SBDC sheds light along that path at all the critical points," said Mark.



**Mark J. Maag, CEO & Founder**

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