

Case Study Cheney Brothers



RYTEC

HIGH PERFORMANCE DOORS

Doors Ensure Access to Massive Inventory for a Major Food Distribution/Foodservice Company

It started with milk and eggs more than 85 years ago. Today, Cheney Brothers ships from two locations, going beyond their home state of Florida to customers in the southeastern United States, the Caribbean, Mexico, and Latin America. In addition to dry storage areas, both the newer 480,000 sq ft facility in Ocala, Florida, and the original 325,000 sq ft distribution center further south at the Riviera Beach location have refrigerated multi-temperature warehouses and freezers monitored by state-of-the-art computer systems. With over a billion dollars a year in revenue, the company is currently building a third DC, 345,000 square feet, in Punta Gorda, Florida, to handle its burgeoning sales.

To keep up with this demand, inventory has to move in and out of the facility in an uninterrupted flow, particularly from freezer storage. To maintain frozen product quality and guarantee quick access, Cheney Brothers has Rytec® Turbo-Seal® Insulated doors on their freezer and chilled storage rooms for unimpeded and rapid storage and retrieval.



Innovation Keeps Generating Competitive and Profitable Advantages

Along with fresh and frozen products - including meats, seafood, poultry, specialty cheeses, ice cream, frozen entrees, hors d'oeuvres, fresh produce, and beverages - the company also ships out paper goods, restaurant supplies, equipment, and cleaning solutions. Because of the growing diversity of the market in that region, including a variety of cuisines and tastes, Cheney Brothers ships more than 19,000 items to more than 16,000 accounts, all of which require sophisticated systems to order, stock, and ship.

Cheney Brothers employs computers to monitor the path of products, from the racking to the dock and on to the customer. They also use satellite tracking to follow the company-owned fleet as it travels a combined route of more than 8,000,000 miles a year.

Key Facts

Organization

Cheney Brothers

Location

Ocala, FL

Challenges

- Maintain product quality
- Minimize door maintenance
- Reduce energy costs
- Improve product flow

Solution

Rytec® Turbo-Seal® Insulated Doors

Results

- Reduced cold air infiltration out of the freezer
- Reduced energy costs
- Minimized product flow interruption
- Door performance optimized

“We cannot afford to have a door down - ever.”

- Danny Wells
Senior Director of Engineering
Cheney Brothers

Getting this product to market requires intricate planning and execution, with every link in the chain needing to perform, including the low-temp doors. As Cheney Brothers Senior Director of Engineering Danny Wells puts it, “we cannot afford to have a door down – ever.”

Under the supervision of Wells, the company aggressively maintains tight temperature control. They maintain 38-40°F docks, with product going in and out of -5°F freezer storage and 34°F cooler rooms, which include a fleet of temperature-controlled trucks.

In the past, door damage sometimes meant taking a door out of operation for repair. This was a problem for Cheney Brothers because of the high volume of product and their customer service philosophy, which involves emergency orders for restaurants or hotels that forgot to order something or ordered an inadequate quantity. They strive to deliver last-minute orders ASAP and the last thing they need is a disabled door.

Productive Relationships

Loyalty is one of the main management philosophies at Cheney Brothers, from the owners on down, resulting in low workforce turnover. This extends to supplier relations. According to Wells, “we have been approached by a number of door companies, all of which try to come in on price.”

“While a low price for equipment is nice, what we can’t afford is door down time, and Rytec’s product reliability has proven itself throughout our relationship.”

This food distribution company has always been an early adopter when it comes to technology. For example, they equip employees from the sales person on the streets to the executives in the suites with a mix of mobile enterprise devices including iPhones, iPads and Android devices. To be a part of this relationship Rytec continually demonstrates a willingness to innovate with Cheney Brothers. “We have no problem being a beta site for Rytec’s ideas,” says Wells.

In fact one of the engineers of Cheney Brothers’ staff, Eric Andrews, works closely with Rytec to develop product ideas and improvements.

One idea Andrews came up with in conjunction with Rytec has to do with counterweight maintenance. Originally, periodic inspection of the door’s counterweight required removing the vertical side guide that covered and protected it. For the 10’ x 16’ doors that provide access into the high-rack freezer, inspection meant bringing the scissors lift over to the door and lifting someone up to the top of the side column to remove the screw.

Andrews and Rytec instead came up with a Plexiglass window in the door’s side column for easy inspection. “This time-

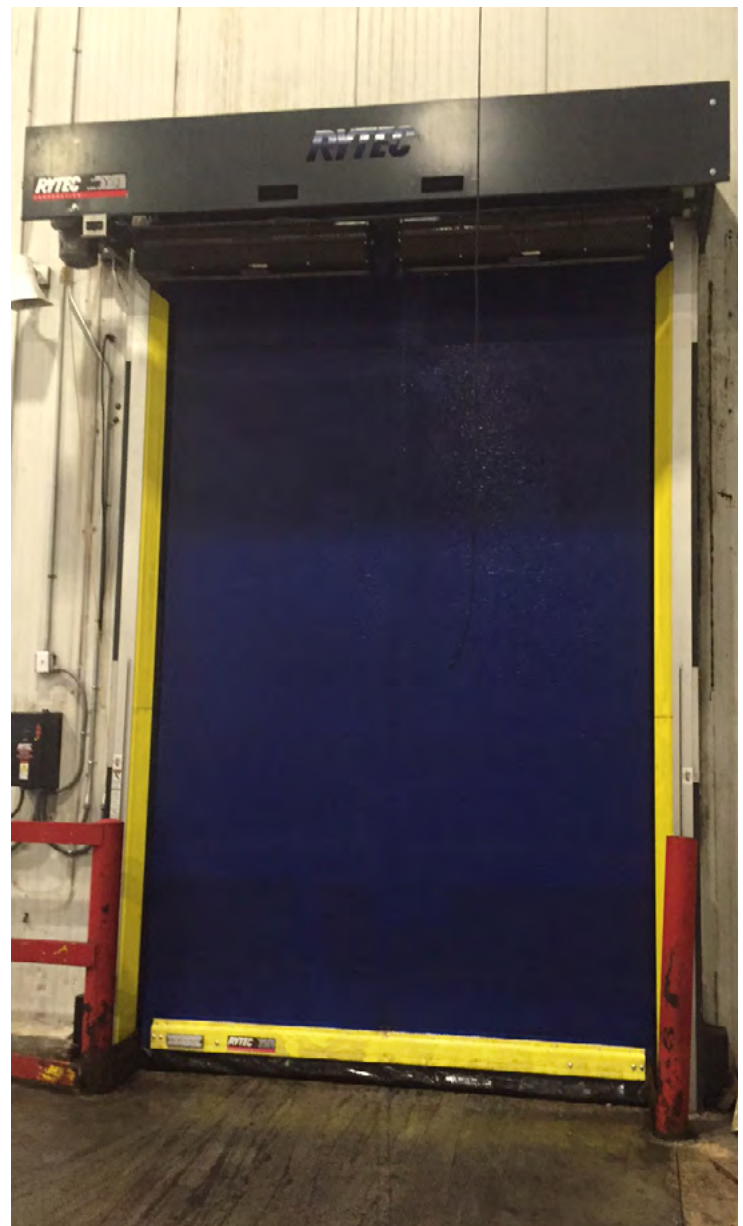
saving idea, along with the many others we have developed,” says Wells, “is one example of how Rytec listens to us and their commitment to their product.”

“This feature we engineered together also points to the serviceability of Rytec doors.”

The Work Doesn’t Stop – The Doors Keep It That Way

Cheney Brothers’ facilities are busy, operating 24 hours a day during a six-day week. At the Ocala location there are 26 forklifts and 105 pallet jacks roaming the floor, and the Rytec doors don’t get in the way of traffic. Opening and closing at a rapid speed of 100 inches per second, the 16’ tall Rytec door on the freezer is fully accessible in just a split under two seconds.

The high speed ensures that the doors do not go down from forklift collisions, because the panel is running too fast to be caught. In the rare event of a collision the panel is harmlessly knocked out of its guides, and it can be quickly inserted back in the guides by simply opening and closing the door.





This and other features are why Wells likes the reliability of the Rytec doors. “There are doors at Riviera Beach that we’ve had for 15 years and are still in operation after over three million cycles.”

The Turbo-Seal Insulated door speed plays a role in saving energy. The differential between the freezer and the dock is at least 43°F. Conventional wisdom once dictated that freezer doorways called for heavy panel sliding doors to prevent heat transmission.

However, these solid panel doors would cause two problems for Cheney Brothers. The slow speed could severely cripple product flow through the facility. Moreover, because those doors slide from side to side they take up wall space equal to the doorway area. The facility needs all the wall space it can get for product racking for those 19,000 SKUs.

Keeping It Cold

With an operation that sees thousands of cycles per day per door, heat transmission isn’t an issue because the door is rarely closed. Plus, the Rytec door’s high speed minimizes doorway exposure, greatly reducing cold air infiltration out of the freezer. When the door is closed, it is tightly sealed. The vertical edge of the door is encased in the side guides to prevent cold air escape. Brush seals are along the top of the panel, and at the bottom is a floor-hugging gasket.

Like all cold storage DCs, energy is a big part of operating expenses and both facilities are trying to save as much of it as possible. For example, all of their warehouses are now lit by LED light fixtures, which will include the pending Punta Gorda site.

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Cheney also saves thousands of dollars every year at each doorway that has the ultra-high-speed Turbo-Seal Insulated door. In addition, the compressors don't have to operate as hard to keep freezer temperatures at the specified level.

Recently Ocala had a freezer expansion and they replaced their older strip curtain doors with new Turbo-Seal Insulated doors. According to Wells, replacing the 60-amp heated blower over the doorway, along with other savings, has reduced energy bills by an estimated \$8,000 to \$10,000 per year per door.

Tastes in food are changing continually, resulting in broad-line distribution centers such as those operated by Cheney Brothers to not only stock products, but also develop ways to get product out to niche markets as efficiently as possible. Both the reliability of and the innovations behind the Rytec doors allow product to find their way to market while keeping costs under control.



About Cheney Brothers, Inc.

Founded in 1925, Cheney Brothers has grown from a distributor of milk and eggs, to become one of the largest, most progressive food distributors in the South. Built on the same family tradition of exceptional service and value, Cheney Brother's annual sales now exceed \$1 billion with service extending throughout the southeast United States and over 80 countries worldwide including the Caribbean, Central and South America, Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East. www.cheneybrothers.com

About Rytec High Performance Doors

Rytec is North America's leading independent manufacturer of high-speed, high-performance doors for industrial, commercial, and cold-storage environments. From security doors to traffic doors, every door addresses a specific operational and environmental challenge, and is engineered for maximum safety, productivity, and efficiency. Corporate offices and manufacturing operations are headquartered in Jackson, Wisconsin. Customer support is provided through national and regional offices and a network of local dealers and installers throughout North America. www.rytecdoors.com

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