

# Juanita's Sells Majority Stake

A majority stake of Wilmington-based Mexican food company Juanita's Foods was sold last week to Apex Capital.

**By MONÉE FIELDS-WHITE**  
*Staff Reporter*

Juanita's Foods, a leading manufacturer and distributor of traditional Mexican food, sold a majority stake of its Wilmington-based company to private equity firm Apex Capital.

While financial terms weren't disclosed, the sale was part of an estate planning process for the De La Torre family, who founded the food company in 1946, said Lloyd Greif, chief executive of downtown-based investment banking firm Greif & Co. which represented the family.

The De La Torre family, which has operated the business for three generations, retained a minority ownership stake and will remain involved in the company's daily operations. Partnering with Apex Capital has offered the family owners an opportunity to grow its existing business, said Aaron De La Torre, chief executive of Juanita's Foods.

"Apex Capital brings the expertise and resources needed to support our continued growth while preserving our dedication to our employees and customers," said De La Torre. "Together, we will drive long-term value and innovation."

## Best known for canned foods

Juanita's Foods is known for its canned Mexican food staples, beginning with its traditional menudo. The company touts that it's the top seller of canned



*Leaders: Pedro Palma and Aaron De La Torre.*

menudo, carving out more than 95% of market share. Over the decades, the company has added to its product line, including pozole, hominy, albondigas, nacho cheese sauce, taco sauce and tortilla chips.

"There's a lot of growth potential" for Juanita's, Greif said. This includes expanding into new markets like Texas and Florida, as well as launching new product lines. This growth can happen even amid the perfect storm, with the potential threat of an economic recession and looming tariffs.

"The company continues to prosper and grow," Greif said. "And if anybody is in a good position to weather the storm, it's Juanita's Foods."

Miami-based Apex Capital plans to maintain Juanita's manufacturing operations in California. Juanita's has about 160 employees.

Apex Capital, which is affiliated with Guatemalan food and beverage conglomerate Grupo Mariposa, has begun broadening its footprint in the U.S. market with the purchase.

"This investment is a strong fit with our strategy of nurturing heritage Hispanic brands with high growth potential, guided by a focus on operational excellence and sustainable value creation," said Pedro Palma, managing partner at Apex Capital.