

WTHR spoke with Jeff Parks, president of Pass Pets Ltd., who rarely speaks with the media. Parks declined to submit written answers to our questions but agreed to speak with us by phone. Below are portions of our interview with Parks about Pass Pets, which has ten stores in Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and Tennessee.

WTHR: Where do you get most of the puppies sold in your stores?

Parks: “The more local the better of f you are.” Parks says, “I’ve been selling dogs for 38 years and 70% of the puppies sold in our pet stores are from Indiana.”

Park also says Missouri-based Pass Pets gets some puppies from that state, as well. “[We] are lucky to be in Missouri to make sure we get good dogs.”

He said dog breeding and the pet industry has improved over the years. “(I) believe in what I’m doing or I wouldn’t do it. When we get unwanted litters, we guarantee [to the owners] the puppies will be sold, instead of taken to a shelter.” He said all puppies are thoroughly checked out by the pet store’s veterinarian before they are sold.

Parks said his company provides “thousands of people with happy healthy puppies...” and thinks “it’s wrong for people to say we [pet stores] are increasing the pet population in shelters.”

WTHR: What are your recommendations for those interested in buying a puppy?

Parks: “The best thing is to learn about the breed.” He recommends talking to other dog owners and says “pet stores are the best place to go and to learn about breeds because they have a wide variety of dogs.”

WTHR: What is the biggest challenge of owning a pet store chain that sells puppies?

Parks: “It’s polarizing to own a pet store, the public perception.” Parks clarifies that each of his ten stores is inspected once a year. “Health is the biggest challenge... to do everything to make sure [the puppies] are healthy.”