WTHR contacted Steve Rook, president of the Hunte Corporation in Goodman, Missouri. He extended an invitation for 13 Investigates to visit his puppy distributing facility. WTHR declined the invitation because it was conditional upon a requirement that 13 Investigates could not videotape any dogs in enclosures at the facility. According to Rook, showing video of dogs in cages "just doesn't look good." Rook provided the following answers to our questions:

WTHR: How many puppies does Hunte Corporation purchase and distribute annually?
The Hunte Corporation is a privately held company; for competitive reasons, we do not share financial or volume related data.

WTHR: Is there an age or size restriction?
No puppy enters the Hunte program until it is at least 8 weeks of age. There are minimum and maximum size standards for each breed that guide our veterinarians when evaluating puppies for possible entry into our program.

WTHR: How many puppies are transported and delivered at one time and how long does the journ take?
Again, we do not discuss volume statistics. We hand deliver puppies coast to coast and the length of the journey varies according to destination. In the case of our customers in Indiana, the journey takes approximately 14 hours. Each Hunte puppy is delivered in a customized Hunte Delivery vehicle specially designed to ensure the care and well being of the puppy, and to minimize stress. These customized vehicles feature temperature, humidity and vibration controlled environments as well as ultraviolet, sterilized air systems to protect the health of the puppies and minimize stress. Delivery vehicle attendants go through more than 100 hours of training, supervised by veterinarians, to ensure that they are able to care for the needs of the puppies during transit. Our veterinarians supervise the delivery program from start to finish, and a Hunte veterinarian is on call 24 hours each day should a delivery attendant ever encounter a challenge that is beyond his or her training level.

WTHR: Are different "hubs" or locations used to collect the puppies where they are then taken to your main facility?
No the Hunte Corporation does not maintain or operate satellite hubs or separate facilities. (Addendum to first answer provided): We do purchase at Buffalo, it is our only other location outside of Goodman. One of our veterinarians has been stationed at Buffalo for the last two years, and we accept a small number of puppies at that location. The puppies are then transported to Goodman in one of our customized Hunte Delivery vehicles.

WTHR: How many puppies can your facility house at one time?
Again, for competitive reasons we do not disclose volume related information.

WTHR: In terms of brokers, how many does Hunte deal with?
We do not deal with brokers. Brokers facilitate the exchange of products and charge a commission in exchange for that service. The Hunte Corporation is a USDA licensed

distributor. We purchase puppies directly from USDA licensed breeders. We take ownership of puppies purchased from licensed breeders and then sell and hand deliver to retail pet centers.

WTHR: Are there breeders/brokers Hunter refuses to do business with? If so, why?
We do not do business with any substandard facilities. In addition, we maintain highly detailed records of any health claims that are congenital. Our system blocks the purchase of puppies from sires and dams that have produced puppies with congenital health conditions. When a congenital health condition arises, our veterinary staff notifies the breeder and advises that the sire and dam involved not be bred again. Most breeders comply with this recommendation.

WTHR: What types of puppy standards does Hunter require – and how are those standards checked
We require two types of standards: health and breed typical appearance. As far as health standards are concerned, the criteria we use are created, supervised and maintained by our veterinary staff. Before we accept any puppy into the Hunter program it receives a complete veterinary examination no different than the examination it would receive if presented to any veterinarian anywhere in the United States for the purpose of a health examination. Simply stated, the puppy must be 100% healthy in order to enter our program. Breed typical appearance concerns standards established by the American Kennel Club and other respected canine organizations. We follow their guidelines and we purchase pet quality breed typical puppies, although we offer many puppies that go on to become champions in their breeds. Almost all Hunter puppies are offered with a five generation pedigree.

WTHR: Does Hunter utilize "buyers" who travel to inspect breeding facilities? If so how often?
Yes, we conduct hundreds of inspections each year. These inspections are carried out by our veterinarians and breeder support experts, as well as our purchasing agents.

WTHR: What are the biggest challenges for Hunter in the puppy resale industry?
The Hunter Corporation is a one of a kind world class company that is dedicated to doing what is right for puppies. That is our mission. We spare no expense to ensure the highest possible standards of animal care. We are known internationally as the very best at what we do. Our biggest challenge is that we are sometimes considered in the same context as other businesses who may not share this commitment.