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70 Years in the HDD Industry

Santa Maria, CA 05/23/2016—When Los Angeles native Fred Melsheimer began adapting drilling techniques from the oil industry and applying them to a horizontal slurry boring process, he started a legacy that has continued for 70 years.

In 1961 Dick, Melsheimer's son, joined the family business and began expanding on the horizontal drilling his father started. Dick designed and built the Sure Shot – one of the very first directional drill rigs with the ability to use locating equipment, as well as a strong line of HDD tooling. When the industry started growing and more HDD manufacturers emerged, the family business, now named Melfred Borzall, started focusing on producing HDD tooling.

“Drilling tools have always been our strength. Our goal was and still is to make every manufacturer's HDD rig run better with the right drilling tools,” Dick explained.

Dick's own sons, Eric and Peter Melsheimer, grew up working summers in the family business. Peter started working full time after graduating college demonstrating the Sure Shot from coast to coast and educating the utility industry about the possibilities of modern HDD.

“Those years of demonstrating with light, lower powered equipment and first generation locating equipment were extremely challenging, but emphasized to us the importance of properly designed tooling for successful HDD. Cutter placement, clearances, fluid port placement – small refinements can make all the difference for a successful bore,” Peter said.

After working several years in aerospace, Eric made the decision to come to Melfred full time. “I had always loved rockets and space craft, but the reality of aerospace at the time was a lot of canceled projects. It was rewarding to come back to Melfred Borzall and come up with a solution to a drilling problem for a customer – design a tool, build the tool, then go out and use it to solve that customer's challenge.” After starting full time, Eric trained a drill crew using the Sure Shot and made the first successful HDD underground river crossing in New Zealand.

Now in its eighth decade, Dick has moved into a “President Emeritus” role, while Eric and Peter have stepped up as President and Director of Marketing, respectively. Though

under different titles, the brothers share leadership responsibilities at Melfred. “It’s a real partnership. We try to leverage each other’s strengths,” Eric said. With his years of HDD experience Dick continues to support Melfred working in the field with HDD drillers and Melfred Borzall distributors.

The two brothers are working hard to continue the tradition of innovation and industry leadership Melfred is known for by utilizing cutting edge tool design and strategic marketing and communication techniques.

“We are humbled and fortunate to step into leadership roles at Melfred and are excited about the direction the company is going,” Peter said. “We look forward to continuing the legacy of innovation and customer service our grandfather and father started as we combine 70 years of knowledge in underground construction along with 21st century manufacturing and design, and new sales and marketing approaches.”