1948 70th Anniversary 2018

McLean

Don H. McLean and Ken McLean

A Family Business Built on Enduring Relationships

A Supplement to:
Construction Equipment Guide®

MCLEAN COMPANY CELEBRATES 70 YEARS IN BUSINESS

REPRESENTING THE SECOND- AND THIRD-GENERATION OF FAMILY LEADERSHIP, FLANKED BY SECOND GENERATION'S FRED H. MCLEAN AND DON K. MCLEAN, ARE THIRD-GENERATION FAMILY MEMBERS DOUG MCLEAN, BILL MCLEAN, CAREY (MCLEAN) BROCKMAN, DON S. MCLEAN, AND SCOTT MCLEAN.

1948 70th Anniversary McLean 2018

By Giles Lambertson
CEG CORRESPONDENT

The McLean Company doesn't sell doodads, widgets, or, for that matter, skid steers. Inventory in the equipment yards of McLean's three Ohio branches is dominated by half-million-dollar machines. Pavers weighing up to 22 tons. Twenty-five-ton rollers. Massive machines with 1,000 horses powering them. These are not cute machines — or, as Scott McLean puts it, these are not "commodity items."

"To buy one of our machines is a significant capital investment," the McLean vice-president said. "We sell very highly specialized machinery that gives a buyer quite an advantage on the job. You hear the buzz-word 'valued-added.' Well, we feel The McLean Company offers our customers extremely added value — the machinery itself and our support system, which is why we have so many repeat customers."

The McLean Company is a family firm with roots in the old Barber-Greene machinery firm founded in Illinois early in the 20th century. Two mechanical engineers, Harry Barber and William Greene, developed something revolutionary — the asphalt paver. Their invention launched an industry and two other men soon became a part of it — Don H. McLean and his brother, Kenneth.

Andrew Brockman, representing the fourth generation of the McLean family in the company, was joined by the third generation's Carey (McLean) Brockman, Bill McLean and Don McLean at a recent company event.

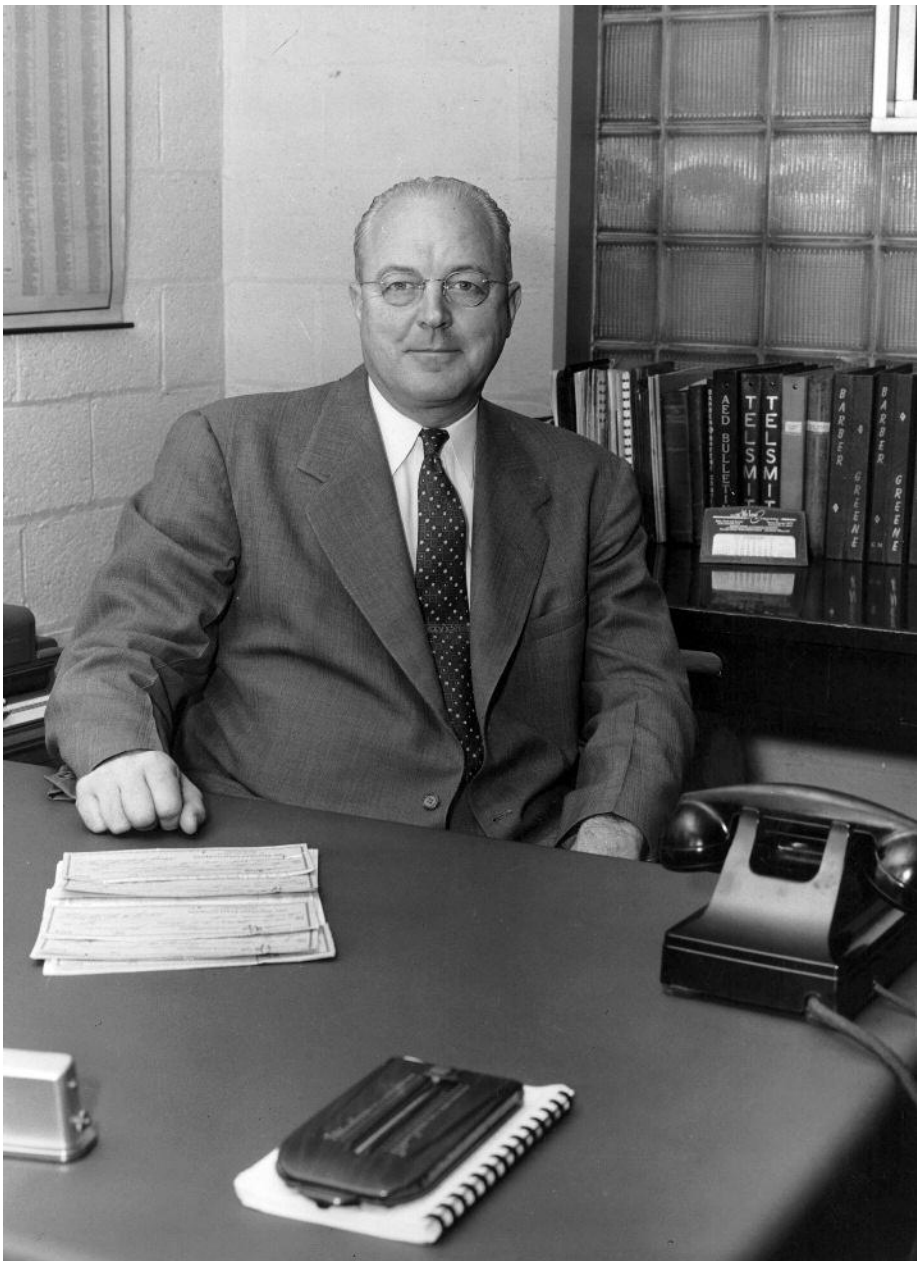
When Barber-Greene decided after World War II to promote its products through dealers instead of company-owned stores, the McLean brothers incorporated their own namesake company. For the next 46 years, The McLean Company distributed industry-leading Barber-Greene products. When Caterpillar gobbled up the Barber-Greene paving division in the late 1980s, The McLean Company stayed on as a distributor of paving equipment under the Caterpillar umbrella.

"During the five years that followed Caterpillar taking over," said Don McLean, company president and grandson of founder Don H. McLean, "most distributors had their contracts cancelled, but we still sold the products. We lived up to all of Cat's expectations until 1994 when we parted ways on our own terms."

"The old saying is that the first generation starts something, the second generation grows it, and the third generation flushes it down the toilet. There is a lot of personal pride in the third generation and we weren't going to let that happen. The company is transitioning into the fourth generation of leadership now and a lot of companies don't get there."

Scott McLean

Barber-Greene calendar from founding year in 1948 next to 70th year calendar



Company founder Don H. McLean.

> *"We are a family business and we run it like we are. Our saying is, we hire here and retire here."*
>
> **Don S. McLean**

Today, Barber-Greene is no more, but The McLean Company is going strong as a Wirtgen America/LeeBoy dealer with an array of paving industry products.

The company at first sold Wirtgen milling machinery, CedarRapids asphalt pavers, Hyster compaction equipment, and GenCor asphalt plants. Nine years later, when Wirtgen offered its Vogele paver, The McLean Company became an all-in Wirtgen Group dealer. Don McLean calls the company's partnership with Wirtgen "a perfect marriage." Some 15 brands of equipment now constitute the McLean lineup, including Hamm, Kleemann, LeeBoy, Rosco and Stewart-Amos.

The sheer variety of major brands of equipment might seem unwieldy at first, but the company president, who heads the Cleveland-area office, said more unites the product line than divides it.

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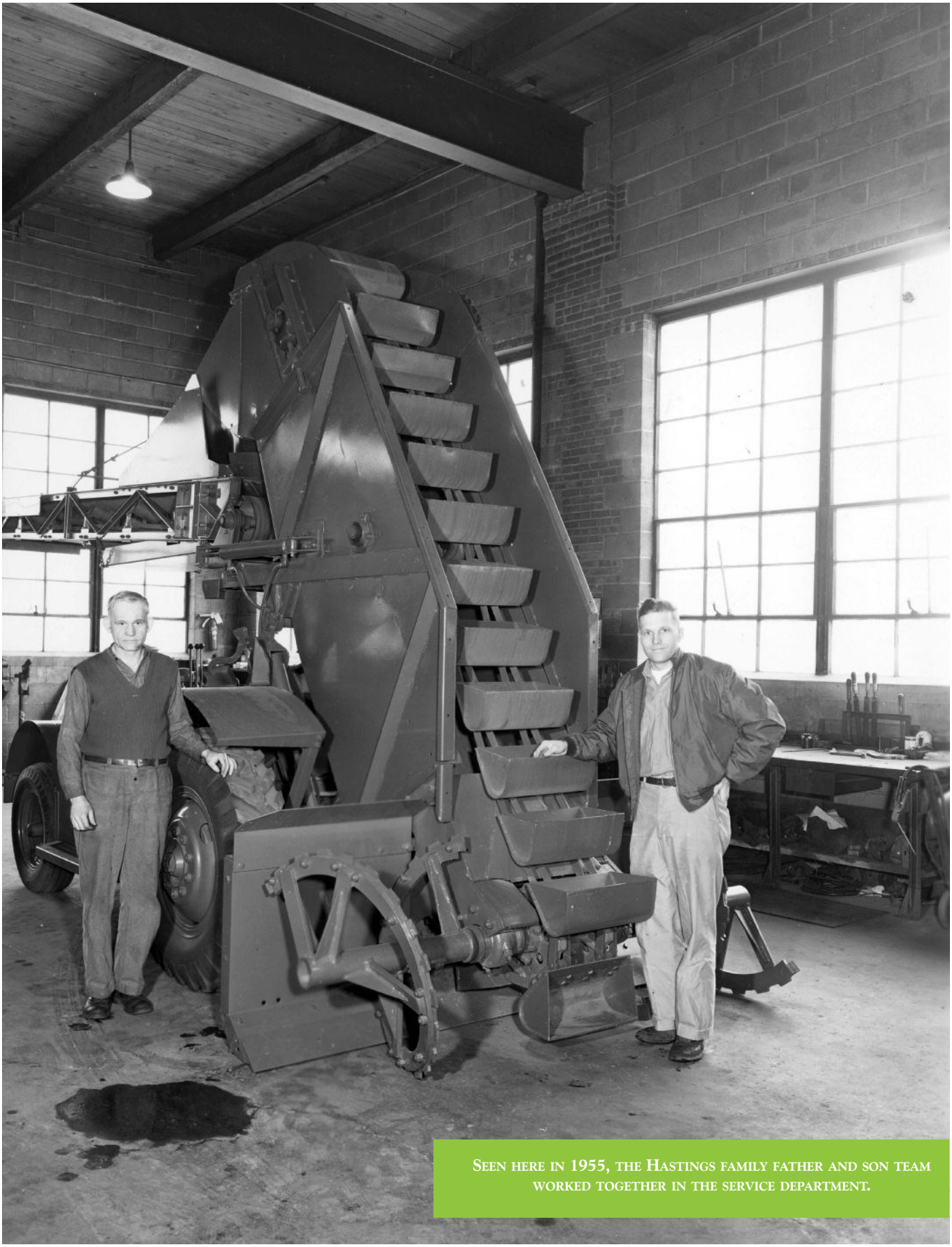

Seen here in 1955, the Hastings family father and son team worked together in the service department.

At the far right in this photo, Don K. McLean attends a paver start-up for Northern Ohio Paving in 1980.

"All the accounts very much involve road construction," he said. "We stay really, really focused on that. Whether it is a LeeBoy or a Vogele paver, it is still a paver. The principles are the same whether it is a driveway being paved or a highway. It is a niche market."

Scott McLean said what the products have in common is that they are "road technology equipment." For a few years, the company sold dirt equipment along with the other machinery. It never felt quite right to McLean.

"That's not who we are and not what we do," he said. "We say our business is anything behind the orange barrels. We don't stray far from the curb."

The company refocused on its niche market of precise, heavy paving machinery to become perhaps the only distributor in the state to sell such equipment exclusively.

> ***"That allows us to be experts in our field. Our customer base realizes that and understands what that means. It's part of what we bring to the table. As a customer once said, 'If I have a problem, all I have to do is call The McLean Company.'"***
>
> **Scott McLean**

McLean third-generation family members Doug McLean, Bill McLean, Carey (McLean) Brockman, Don S. McLean and Scott McLean.

"That allows us to be experts in our field," Scott McLean said. "Our customer base realizes that and understands what that means. It's part of what we bring to the table. As a customer once said, 'If I have a problem, all I have to do is call The McLean Company.'"

The original company office was a lot in downtown Cleveland two-thirds of an acre in size. The current Cleveland-area office is on five acres beside Chittenden Road in Hudson, midway between Cleveland and Akron. The Columbus dealership and West Chester office — north of Cincinnati — are two-acre properties. The West Chester facility is being expanded to seven service bays from three. Forty-seven employees staff the three sites.

Second generation's Fred H. McLean and Don K. McLean.

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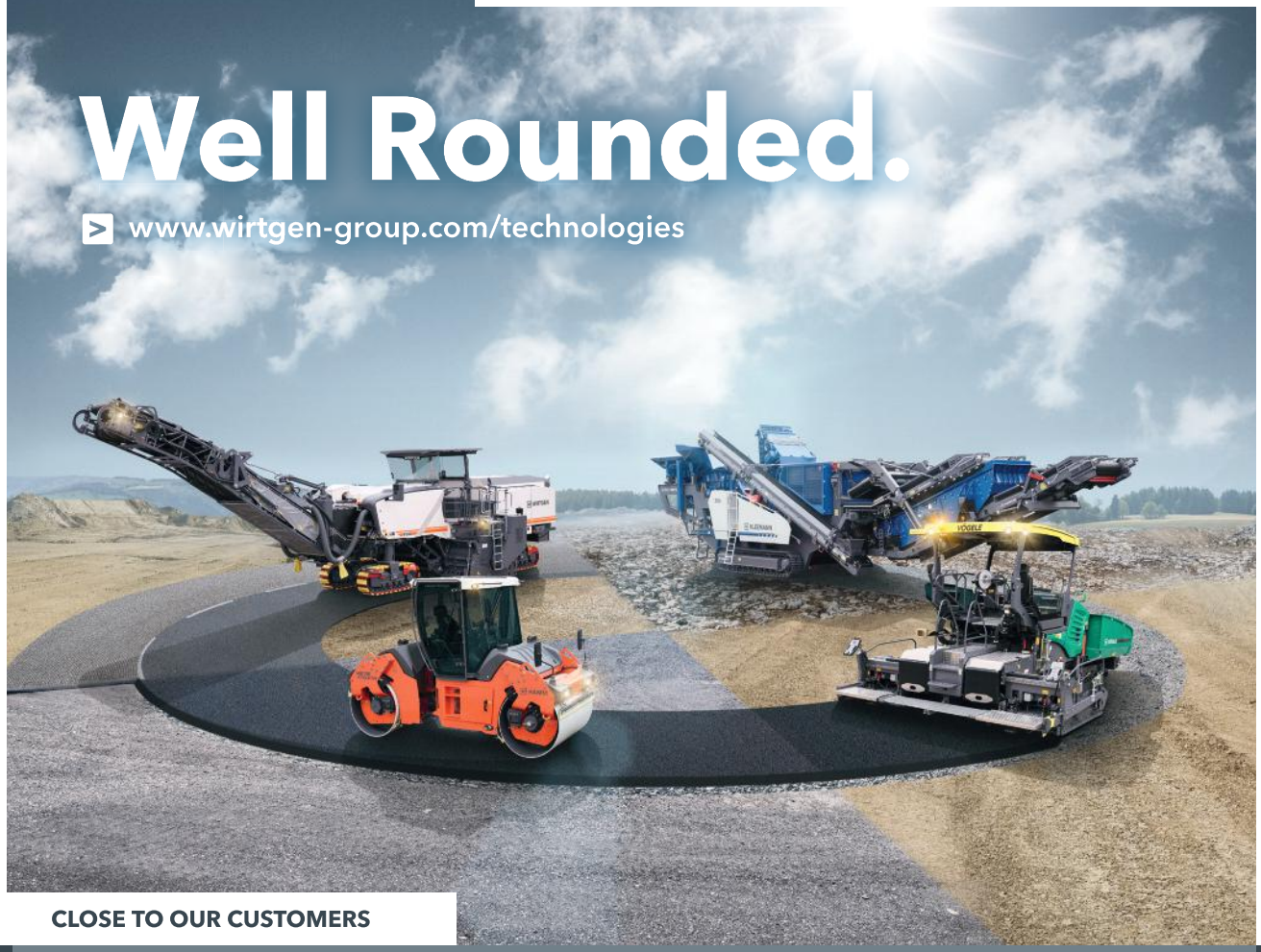

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The Ohio company, of course, experienced the tough times that visited the nation's economy during the past 70 years. The second generation of McLeans took over in 1976 as the U.S. slowly recovered from recession. In the half-dozen years immediately following, a stagnant economy and roaring inflation — "stagflation" — took its toll across the country. The McLean Company's response was to introduce something pretty new to heavy equipment distribution: asphalt paver rental.

"It was a tough time," Don McLean said. "It really was. So, my dad and my uncle began renting equipment in the early 1980s when Barber-Greene was still our major account. At that time, no one really rented asphalt paving equipment,

Don K. McLean and Fred McLean receive an award from Barber-Greene.

1926
Donald H. McLean begins working at Barber-Greene.

1930
Donald H. McLean becomes branch manager of Barber-Greene's Cleveland, Ohio, facility.

1948
The McLean Company is founded.

1949
McLean Company's first facility is built at 3525 Lakeside Ave. in Cleveland.

1953
Donald K. McLean joins his father's company.

1956
Fred McLean begins working at the company, joining his father and brother.

1968
The Mclean Company opens a branch in Columbus, Ohio.

1973
McLean Company adds Hyster to its product lineup.

1981
Scott McLean joins the company.

1983
Donald S. McLean joins the company.

The McLean Company's original building on Lakeside Ave. in Cleveland, Ohio.

> *"To buy one of our machines is a significant capital investment. We sell very highly specialized machinery that gives a buyer quite an advantage on the job. You hear the buzz-word 'valued-added.' Well, we feel The McLean Company offers our customers extremely added value — the machinery itself and our support system, which is why we have so many repeat customers."*
>
> **Scott McLean**

but we did it to help our customers tiptoe into buying something, rental with an option to purchase. They could rent it and walk away or rent it and decide to purchase. It is still a very big part of our business, with rental still creating sales."

Renting asphalt paving or asphalt/concrete milling machines might seem risky. Scott McLean acknowledged the risk.

"We probably are one of the few houses that rent milling machines by the week — half-million-dollar machines, $400,000 pavers, commercial parking lot rollers. But customers are responsible for maintenance. We take photographs 360 degrees around a machine so that if someone drops a load of asphalt on top of it or something, it is his responsibility to clean it up."

1991
The McLean Company adds a facility in West Chester, Ohio.

1994
The McLean Company adds Wirtgen milling machines to its product offerings.

1995
The McLean Company adds LeeBoy paving equipment to its lineup.

2000s
Fourth-generation of McLean family members, Mike and Chelsea McLean, Megan Brooks and Andrew Brockman are all active in the company.

2003
The McLean Company takes on the entire Wirtgen Group lineup, including Hamm and Vogele.

Don S. McLean (L) is presented an award by the president of Wirtgen North America, Stu Murray

Don H. McLean receives an award from Barber Greene company.

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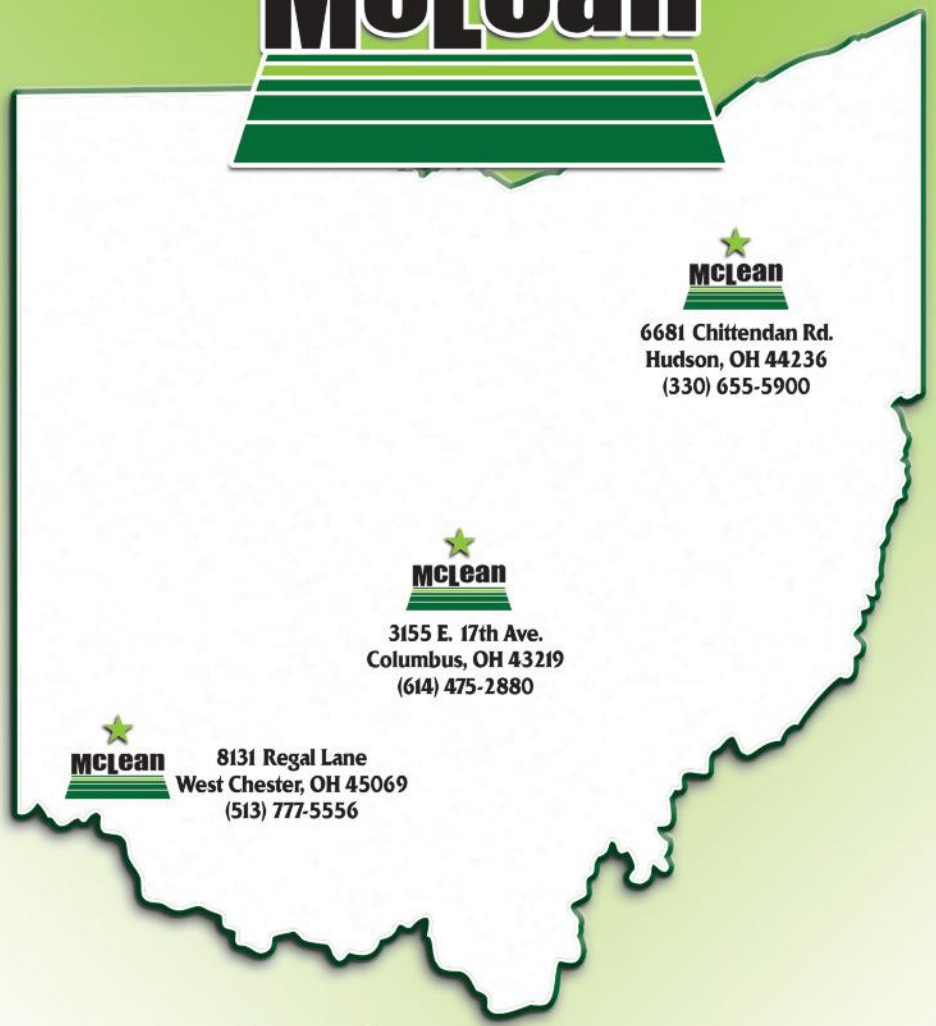

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One consequence of all that is that not every "Tom, Dick and Harry" can work on today's machinery, he said. Instead, machines are returned to McLean dealerships in winter months for rebuilding.

"We increased the size of our service departments at each location for customers who can't work on their machines' proprietary software. Winter rebuilds are a very important part of our business."

After a paver gets 4,000 to 5,000 hours on it, the owner typically hauls the machine back to The McLean Company and spends in the vicinity of $40,000 on an offseason rehab. Shop technicians replace mechanical parts and analyze and upgrade the paver's computerized operating systems and Tier IV Final engine components. Milling machines, of course, are especially vulnerable to wearing.

The McLean Company's product lines are considered to be the best in the "road technology" side of the construction industry. Wirtgen and LeeBoy constitute the paving side, while other McLean products are central to road rehab and maintenance.

In October, Scott McLean traveled to Germany with executives of a long-term business customer. The asphalt and concrete paving company operates in two states and reputedly paves more Ohio roadways than any other company. It is the single largest privately held-company user of Vogele pavers in North America and over the past 15 years has purchased approximately 45 of the pavers.

Despite all that investment, some of the company leaders had never visited the Wirtgen headquarters. That they did so with Scott McLean was appropriate inasmuch as his father, Fred McLean, worked with an earlier generation of the company's executives. This is the "long-term friendship" that Don McLean talks about, an intangible that binds McLean dealers and customers.

"In our industry, things can go wrong," Don McLean said. "It is going to happen. We know most of these people, so when things do go wrong, we get the problem resolved and things working again as quickly as we can."

And the relationships continue to build — with a fourth generation of the relationships beginning to emerge. Two young men and two young women from the next McLean generation are active in the organization, with at least one person working in each branch location.

The McLeans are pleased with that. As Scott McLean explained, his generation very much wanted to pass the reins of the company to those following.

"The old saying is that the first generation starts something, the second generation grows it, and the third generation flushes it down the toilet. There is a lot of personal pride in the third generation and we weren't going to let that happen. The company is transitioning into the fourth generation of leadership now and a lot of companies don't get there."*CEG*

Columbus: Tom Wade (Sales), Jacob Cramer, Mike McLean, Shawn Nettleton, Tina Baker, Megan McLean and Frank Mehr

Wirtgen cold milling machines come in 10-ton to 49-ton sizes — the most popular being the W210i, which is powered by a pair of diesel engines that work in tandem during demanding stages of a milling pass. The engines together produce 720-hp. The largest in Wirtgen's fleet is the W250i, a 97,000-lb. machine. In a single pass, it can rip up a 14½-ft.-wide strip of old asphalt to a depth of 14 in.

While milling machines are bigger and stronger than they were a quarter-century ago, it is the software the really sets apart today's machinery, Scott McLean said.

"I'm more impressed by the technological advances I see in given products today. They've gotten so much more technical. It is not nuts and bolts. It is that people live and die with the laptop. I can locate every machine with GPS and see if it is running. Any fault codes that crop up, I get e-mails to that effect. All the diagnostic code is on line."

Scott McLean is the vice president and he is based at the company's Columbus branch.

"We have companies as customers that our grandfather worked with and then our fathers and now we are working with them. That makes it more of a friendship than a business relationship. Long-term friendship."

Don S. McLean

Columbus Branch Service Department

(L-R): Columbus Branch Service Department — Walt Kautz,Rick Frazier, Zack Boucher, Jakob Cramer, Scott Riffle and Dusty McAdow.

McLean Company's Columbus , Ohio, Branch

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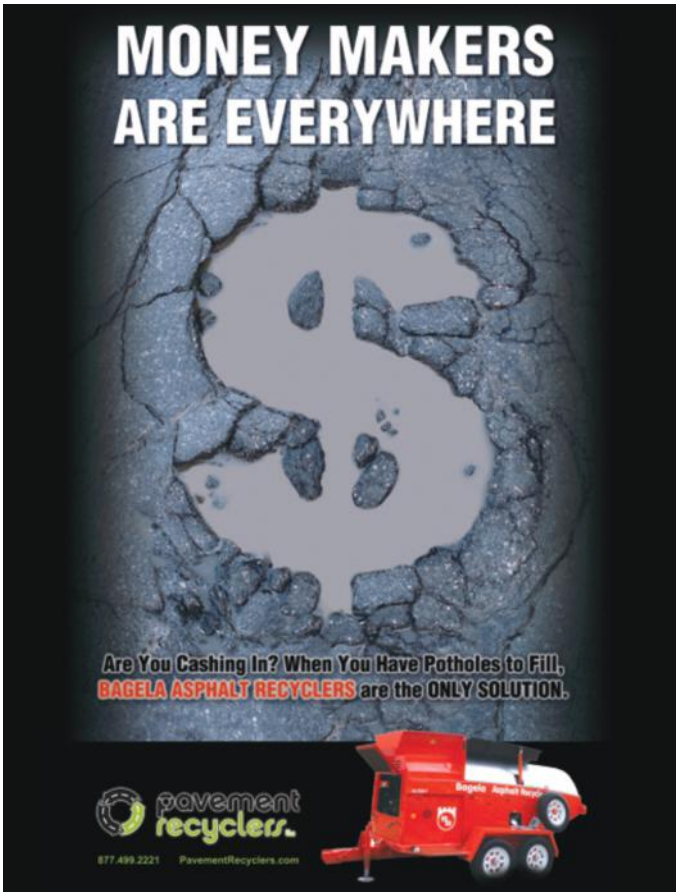

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"The important thing is that we're all on the same team. We've got each other's back."

Operating the family-owned business as a family workplace is by design, Don McLean said. "We are a family business and we run it like we are. Our saying is, we hire here and retire here."

He said the feeling of kinship extends to the customer base.

"We have companies as customers that our grandfather worked with and then our fathers and now we are working with them. That makes it more of a friendship than a business relationship. Long-term friendship."

Technologies evolve. The engineering behind paving and road-making machinery is no exception. Scott McLean said during his time with the company the rise of milling has impressed him.

(L-R): West Chester Branch Service Team — Mike Lokai, Micah Gregory, Baylor Deselem and Greg Vanover.

"Each generation in the company has had some products that are more influential than others," he said. "During my generation, the milling machine has really become a necessity. It started in the '80s and, over time, mill and fill has become almost a standard of the industry."

West Chester Branch Administrative Staff Kirk Sidwell, Anthony Lyttle, Chelsea McLean and Doug McLean.

McLean Company's West Chester, Ohio, branch

McLean's Hudson Branch Sales Staff, Bart Hersey, Jim Hattendorf, Carey Brockman, Greg Zink, Don McLean and Joe Buchtinec.

Hudson Branch Administrative Staff Nina Beck, Brenda Larwood and Wendy Cuva

Hudson Branch Accounting Department CFO Jim DeHart and Controller, Tom Iannini

> *"The important thing is that we're all on the same team. We've got each other's back."*
>
> **Scott McLean**

Scott McLean said the company-wide response to the economic peril let it absorb the blow without buckling. The major adjustment was possible because "we are not a top-heavy company. We don't have a lot of overhead in management. So, we went to the employees and asked them, instead of being laid off, would they agree to work 40 hours a week and get paid for 32? It allowed them to keep their insurance and benefits. We all worked together in that way and survived."

The team approach has contributed to employee longevity throughout the company. Scott McLean listed employees in key positions in all three branches who have been with McLean for 20 and 30 or more years — his secretary, a service manager, a product support manager.

McLean Company's Hudson, Ohio, branch

McLean added that the confidence the company has in its heavy equipment is a key reason that rentals remain a big part of the company business strategy. "It is the comfort factor we have with the products themselves and it is a way of costing things down."

When the recession slugged the United States a decade ago, landing a haymaker on the construction industry in general, The McLean Company responded in an innovative way. Rather than implement layoffs, company executives altered everyone's work schedule.

"We kept the company intact," Don McLean recalled. "Everybody cut back to survive. Everyone could see we were not picking on anyone. We took the cut as a team. Everyone appreciated it."

(L-R): Hudson Branch Product Support Team — Jason Kohler, Collin Vargo, Nathan Johnson, Terry Smith, Joe Kapadia, Rob Polachek, Joe Romano, Andrew Brockman, Steve Jakubowski, Bill Moskin and Dave Cole.

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