**PRESS RELEASE**

 

**For Immediate Release**

Monday, December 14, 2020

**Media Contact:**

Nadine General for O’Connell Electric

585-545-8227

nadine\_general@dixonschwabl.com

## AFTER A HALF-CENTURY AT THE HELM, VICTOR E. SALERNO PASSES THE TORCHTO BECOME CO-CHAIRMAN AT O’CONNELL ELECTRIC; COMPANY NAMES CEO AND FOUR VICE PRESIDENTS

**VICTOR, N.Y.,** **Monday, December 14, 2020** — After 50 years with O’Connell Electric Company, Chief Executive Officer Victor E. Salerno will retire in spring 2022, but will continue as co-chairman of the Board of Directors, completing a 15-year succession plan. Salerno Will be succeeded by current President and COO, Tom Parkes, who has been with the company over 40 years.

A recently established team of vice presidents will assist Tom and the current executive team which includes our other longest-serving officer, Executive Vice President, Treasurer and HR Director Susan Parkes-McNally, as well as Executive Vice President of Operations Joe Pellerite and Chief Financial Officer Jeff Gould, to round out the company’s leadership. This team will position the 110-year-old company for continued success as one of the largest, highest-ranked and most successful electrical contractors in the country. These new Vice Presidents are (1) VP of Syracuse Operations Don Coon, (2) VP of Technical Services Group Joe Leggo, (3) VP of Power Group Michael Parkes, and (4) VP of Construction & Construction Services Brian Rittenhouse.

The nationally renowned company is forecast to reach up to $350 million in fiscal year 2021. Several years ago, Salerno set a personal goal to help the company reach a quarter-billion dollars in revenue before he retired. He surpassed that goal in fiscal year 2019 and is on track to reach a half-billion dollars in revenue before he officially retires.

While the vice presidents will maintain their responsibility to lead their specialty divisions with the highest level of customer satisfaction and sustained profitability, Parkes will transition to oversee and lead the company in executing strategic initiatives, general corporate decision-making, growth of divisions, management of financial decisions and responsibility for the well-being of O’Connell’s 800+ employees. Salerno will step down from the day-to-day activities of the business but will actively assist the leadership team, as they may request his support when needed.

“It has been an honor to be a part of O’Connell Electric for 50 years and serve as CEO for the past 14 years,” Salerno said. “I’m looking forward to supporting the team and company in my advisory role. Tom is well prepared to take the reins. He’ll ensure the company’s fiscal responsibility, make sound investments to keep us in a strong market position in the industry, seek ways to remain competitive, including leveraging technology whenever it’s feasible, investing in capital improvements, and will continue to recruit and train top talent.”

A well-respected and accomplished leader, Parkes is a fourth-generation Master Electrician with nearly five decades at O’Connell Electric who has worked his way to the top, from sweeping floors to president and soon to CEO. He’s earned his esteemed role. Tom has worked very closely with Salerno over the years to thoroughly understand the global success of the company.

(more)

Salerno’s built-in altruistic tendencies will occupy a good deal of his time in retirement. His passion to support the community only grows. “That is what keeps you young,” he said. “Staying involved.” He will remain loyally active on the boards for St. Anne’s Community and St. John Fisher College, among others.

O’Connell Electric Chairman Walter Parkes (Tom’s father) laid the foundation for O’Connell. He began in the trade working for his father at T.H. Green Electric, (the electrical construction company O’Connell acquired the assets of some years later, originally founded by his grandfather). Fast-forward six decades and the rich history continues. Tom will ensure the legacy of his family roots and continue the history through the family foundation established by his parents 26 years ago, the Walter and Carmina Parkes Family Foundation, which is led by his sister Susan Parkes-McNally, who serves as the company’s Executive Vice President, Treasurer and HR Director.

The Mary M. Parkes Center for Asthma, Allergy & Pulmonary Care was established in 1995 by Tom’s parents and sisters in honor of his late sister, Mary M. Parkes, who passed in 1991 due to a severe asthma episode. Affiliated with the University of Rochester Medical Center, Mary Parkes was the first state-of-the-art asthma facility in the Northeastern United States. The company provides regular support to the center through volunteerism, financial support, and the donation of electrical construction services.

O’Connell has a deep bench of extremely committed leaders who give back as much to the community as they dedicate to their company and the industry. Susan Parkes-McNally is the heartbeat of the company, and as Salerno states, “keeps O’Connell Electric’s moral compass facing true north.” A founding family member and board member of the Mary M. Parkes Center and the Parkes Family Foundation, Parkes-McNally has nearly five decades with O’Connell. She manages HR service provisions, policies, and programs, as well as the administration and payroll departments, supports corporate strategic initiatives, and leads many of the company’s corporate events and philanthropic initiatives.

With headquarters in Victor, New York, O’Connell has offices across the state in Rochester, Buffalo, Syracuse, and Albany. The future looks very bright for the privately-owned company poised for expansion in the Mid-Atlantic region.

The leadership transition comes as no surprise to employees, who were made aware of the plans in September 2019. Clients and community partners were informed of the leadership transitions last week.

The O’Connell Electric “blueprint” will stay the same. The new leadership team is committed to maintaining the company’s reputation and good work in the communities it serves, as it has done for more than a century. Team members will not miss a beat throughout the leadership transition and will continue to emphasize the highly customer-centered partnerships O’Connell serves across its four divisions within the company: power, construction, construction services and communications.

Having been under Salerno’s tutelage, Tom and the leadership team are well positioned to grow customer, community, and industry relationships to carry O’Connell into the next era of continued success.

**About O’Connell Electric Company**

Founded in 1911, O’Connell Electric Company is a full service electrical, power line, and communications contractor headquartered in Upstate New York, serving New York State and surrounding regions of the northeast. O’Connell Electric is ranked as Rochester’s largest electrical contractor and one of the nation’s top 50 largest electrical contractors. Headquartered in Victor, NY, the company operates with offices in Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Albany, NY. Learn more at www.oconnellelectric.com.