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150 Years In Business For Local Manufacturer

By Leslie J. Allen
Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

A family-owned and operated manufacturing company in south St. Louis has reached a milestone — its 150th anniversary.

Schaeffer Manufacturing Co., 102 Barton Street, celebrated its anniversary in ceremonies Friday. The company manufactures specialized lubricants, including motor oils, greases, fuel additives, hydraulic fluids and gear lubes.

Another product, "Black Beauty Grease," was used to lubricate the wheels of buggies and wagon trains traveling through the West.

The company says Schaeffer is one of the 15 oldest firms in the St. Louis area.

German immigrant Nicholas Schaeffer founded the company in 1839. During its first 40 years, the company was a major soap and candle manufacturer. Its early customers included the founders of The Procter & Gamble Co. and Colgate-Palmolive Co.

Schaeffer's first lubricants were made of the by-products of animal fats. One lubricant, "Red Engine Oil," was used by steamboats. Another product, "Black Beauty Grease," was used to lubricate the wheels of buggies and wagon trains traveling through the West.

After 1859, the company used petroleum as the base of its lubricating products.

For a short time during the 1850s, Nicholas Schaeffer's partner was Eberhart Anheuser, who later founded Anheuser-Busch Cos. Inc.

A century and a half after its founding, Schaeffer Manufacturing is still run by descendants of Nicholas Schaeffer.

Tom Schaeffer Herrmann, the current president and chief operating of-



Schaeffer Manufacturing Co. Posed under a portrait of Schaeffer Manufacturing Co. founder Nicholas Schaeffer are Tom Schaeffer Herrmann, left, president and chief operating officer, Jackie Schaeffer Herrmann, vice chairman and treasurer, and John Schaeffer Shields, chairman and chief executive officer.

ficer of the company, is the great-great-grandson of Nicholas Schaeffer, and represents the fifth generation of the Schaeffer family to run the company.

After Nicholas Schaeffer's death in 1880, his son Jacob took over the company. Jacob Schaeffer was succeeded by his son-in-law, William Shields, the husband of Marie Schaeffer Shields.

Two of the couple's children, John

Schaeffer Shields and Jackie Schaeffer Herrmann, currently own the company. They took over ownership following the death in 1982 of their older brother, Tom Schaeffer Shields.

John Shields currently is chairman and secretary of the company and Jackie Herrmann is vice chairman and treasurer.

Tom Herrmann is the son of Jackie Herrmann.