



### ***Bassett, Incorporated Receives Manufacturer of the Year Award***

**Milwaukee, WI, February 28, 2008** -- 63 Wisconsin businesses were nominated for the 20<sup>th</sup> annual Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year Awards for outstanding achievements in manufacturing. On Thursday, the nine winning Wisconsin companies were announced at a black-tie awards dinner and program at the Pfister Hotel in Milwaukee.

Bassett, Incorporated dba Bassett Mechanical of Kaukauna was recognized as the 2007 Manufacturer of the Year in the Large Company category. The Large Company category is defined as organizations with 300-999 employees.

The Manufacturer of the Year Awards recognize Wisconsin companies that demonstrate a commitment to business excellence which has a positive impact on the company and the state, making Wisconsin a better place to live, work and play. "This award is an honor to receive as it is recognition from the awards program and our peers, and a testament to the hard work of Bassett's employees" said William Bassett, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer. "Bassett employees are very customer oriented. Their customer focus results from their hard work, commitment and loyalty. Our employees will be ecstatic about this award, and they will be proud about the recognition received for their work ethic," stated President Kim Bassett-Heitzmann.

"Choosing this year's winners was exciting, as well as challenging," said Steve Levy, president and CEO of Bell Laboratories, and one of 15 judges who selected the nine winners for this year's event. "We received 63 very qualified nominations, the second highest number in the event's history. I appreciate the time each judge spent in reading each nomination in detail, and the subsequent discussion time used to select the top manufacturers. The winners we chose are truly the best of the best, as this year's nomination pool was very competitive."

Bassett is an atypical manufacturer, in that it does not produce the same product repeatedly. Instead, each product the company makes is completely different from the rest in terms of size, type, materials used, manufacturing process and ultimate end use. The majority of Bassett's customers are manufacturers themselves, representing the paper, printing, foundries, packaging, plastics and film, ship and yacht building, food processing, cheese and dairy, renewable and wind energy and truck and emergency vehicle industries.

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The company epitomizes a nimble approach to business in its ability to adapt. Through the years, Bassett has responded to challenges through constant innovation, new technology, product diversity and providing high quality products to other Wisconsin manufacturers. Bassett's products help its customers improve their own production capabilities.

Bassett's embrace of Lean Manufacturing has set it apart from its competition. The entire company implemented Lean principles in a wide variety of processes and disciplines, from the business office areas of estimating, dispatch and finance, to the shop floor. On many occasions, suggestions from the shop floor have resulted in improved designs and reduced costs for customers. Collaboration between workers and customers has resulted in better products in terms of overall use and long-term reliability.

In the words of its employees, "Bassett was green, long before green was cool." Since the late 1940s, Bassett has been designing, fabricating, installing and servicing systems to help businesses achieve their goals for both high performance facilities and social responsibility. Around 1990, Bassett led the way in promoting the use of ammonia refrigeration to replace CFC and HCFC refrigerants. Today, Bassett builds ammonia refrigeration systems for many of the nation's food processing companies. Ammonia is the only common refrigerant that does not contribute to ozone depletion and global warming.

An independent panel of judges, with representatives from business, education, government and the media, selected the 2007 Manufacturer of the Year Award winners. More information about the Wisconsin Manufacturer of the Year Awards program can be found at [www.wimoty.com](http://www.wimoty.com).

The statewide recognition program is co-sponsored by Michael Best & Friedrich LLP, a preeminent Midwest-based law firm; Virchow, Krause & Company, LLP, the nation's 15<sup>th</sup> largest accounting and consulting firm; and Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce, the state's largest business association.

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