

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 14, 2021

CONTACT:

Ashley Aram

651-587-4737

ashley@goffpublic.com

Eric Black to succeed Peter McDermott, who is retiring as MDI's president and CEO

McDermott has led the Minneapolis-based nonprofit manufacturer since 2008

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – Local nonprofit manufacturer MDI today announced that President and CEO Peter McDermott will retire on April 1. Taking over the position will be Eric Black, a global business development and integrated marketing leader who spent 23 years at Cargill before entering his current role at Univar Solutions as global director of marketing and technical sales. MDI is a nonprofit corrugated plastic manufacturer and assembly service provider headquartered in Minneapolis with locations in Hibbing, Grand Rapids and Cohasset, with the goal of providing employment for people with disabilities.

"MDI is a mission-minded organization that is driven to provide real results and quality solutions for its customers and employees alike," said Black. "I am eager and humbled to join the MDI team and add to its incredible momentum and growth."

Black will begin his role as president on February 15, overlapping with McDermott until April 1, at which point Black will assume CEO duties as well.

"We are thrilled to welcome Eric to MDI," said Jill Hesselroth, board chair of MDI. "His proven track record of product innovation, business growth and customer satisfaction paired with his deep ties to the community and dedication to relationship building will continue to elevate MDI's reputation, both as an inclusive employer and a reliable manufacturer."

"At the same time, we are deeply thankful for Peter and the decade-plus of growth, direction and impact he has had on our organization and the lives of each and every one of our employees," added Hesselroth. "Our business and our community are better thanks to his leadership."

McDermott has served as president and CEO for over 12 years. His passion and leadership have led MDI to tremendous growth, from \$11 million in sales and 123 employees to \$33 million in sales and 562 employees. He oversaw MDI's multi-year, \$15 million capital investment project of new and upgraded facilities; launched numerous programs that benefited youth and adults with disabilities; led the merger with Deer River Hired Hands; helped MDI obtain ISO quality certifications supporting new medical assembly offerings; and launched a polypropylene line that allowed the manufacturer to expand its products. Under his leadership, MDI grew its commercial sales from \$2 million to \$12 million, while maintaining a key government customer whose order volatility ranged from \$7 million to more than \$37

million each year. Most notably, he improved the working conditions for people with disabilities and advocated on their behalf at the Minnesota Legislature and within the business community.

“I am grateful for the opportunity to lead the team at MDI and provide job opportunities for people with and without disabilities in an inclusive work environment – it has been the highlight of my career,” said McDermott. “I know the organization and the outstanding people who work here will be well-served by Eric, who is a proven, passionate leader. My greatest source of pride has been showing others that people with disabilities can earn the independence, fulfillment and empowerment that employment provides when given the opportunity, and I know MDI will continue to exemplify this philosophy for years to come.”

Black’s headshot is available [here](#). McDermott’s headshot is available [here](#).

###

About MDI

MDI is a trusted Minnesota manufacturer and nonprofit social enterprise with the mission to provide employment opportunities and services for people with disabilities. We create high-quality plastic containers to ship, pack and store products, and offer unparalleled product assembly and packaging services for organizations across the country, from small businesses to Fortune 500 companies. By offering an inclusive workplace that allows employees to build confidence, independence and purpose, MDI’s work results in dedicated employees and satisfied customers. To learn more, visit mdi.org.