

Brea's Oldest Family Owned Business

Brea Electric

Over the years they've grown, developed, changed, and passed down the business from generation to generation, but Brea Electric, which now services all of Orange County and even parts of Riverside, LA and San Diego Counties is the oldest family owned business still in Brea.

"We get calls all the time from people who say that my grandfather Frank wired their house back in the 30s or 40s," says Brea Electric's third generation owner / operator Richard Holly. "It's great to see that we've still maintained such great relationships through all those years."

Richard's grandfather, Frank Holly and his mother, moved to Brea back in the early 1920s with little more than the dream of a better life. They spent their first year in Brea basically homeless, living in a tent on what is now the corner of Lambert and

Brea Blvd. Eventually Frank landed a job with a very young Brea Electric company in 1928 which he eventually bought in 1932. Oil was booming and Frank made the decision to expand his small residential electric company to work on powering up the oil rigs that dominated the landscape. "My grandfather was truly a self made man," says Richard. "He came from nothing and developed a thriving business." Frank was one of those rare people who had a good head for business and genuinely liked people. "He saw everyone as a friend and a neighbor and I think that rubbed off on both my dad and me."

In the 1930s Brea Electric serviced homes, businesses, industry and everything in between. This is still the case today. Brea Electric is unusual in that their specialty has become the communities they service as opposed to any specific type of electrical work. "We upgrade, remodel and still do any and all electrical work," says Richard, "just like we have for decades. We wire homes, offices, apartment buildings, grocery stores, auto dealers, repair shops, and even golf courses. It's still exciting for me to drive by a building or home and think, 'we did that'."

As the third Holly to own Brea Electric, Richard grew up in the electric business. He learned it and embraced it from the very beginning. "I never had a problem going into the



Richard Holly and the crew

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family business," says Richard. "I love doing electrical, I've always enjoyed figuring out problems or designing complicated electric solutions." In fact, during our interview multiple calls came in from Richard's staff in the field and Richard handled them all as if he were there on site, offering suggestions, direction and solutions. It was obvious that Richard knows the business and his staff looks up to him for answers to tough questions.

According to Richards' dad, Donald Holly, it was Richard who really took the family

business to the next level. "Richard is better with people than either me or his grandfather ever were. It's Richard's ability to surround himself with quality people who are as passionate about electrical work as him that keeps the business growing," says Donald.

Richard says he still looks forward to work everyday and loves every aspect of the family business. "When my dad decided that it was time for him to retire back in 1990, my wife and I made the decision to purchase the business. It took eight years to do it but we've never

doubted the decision. Electric is the only thing us Holly's know how to do. It's all I've ever known... and since my golf game is nowhere near good enough to take me to the pros I expect I'll just keep doing this."

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