

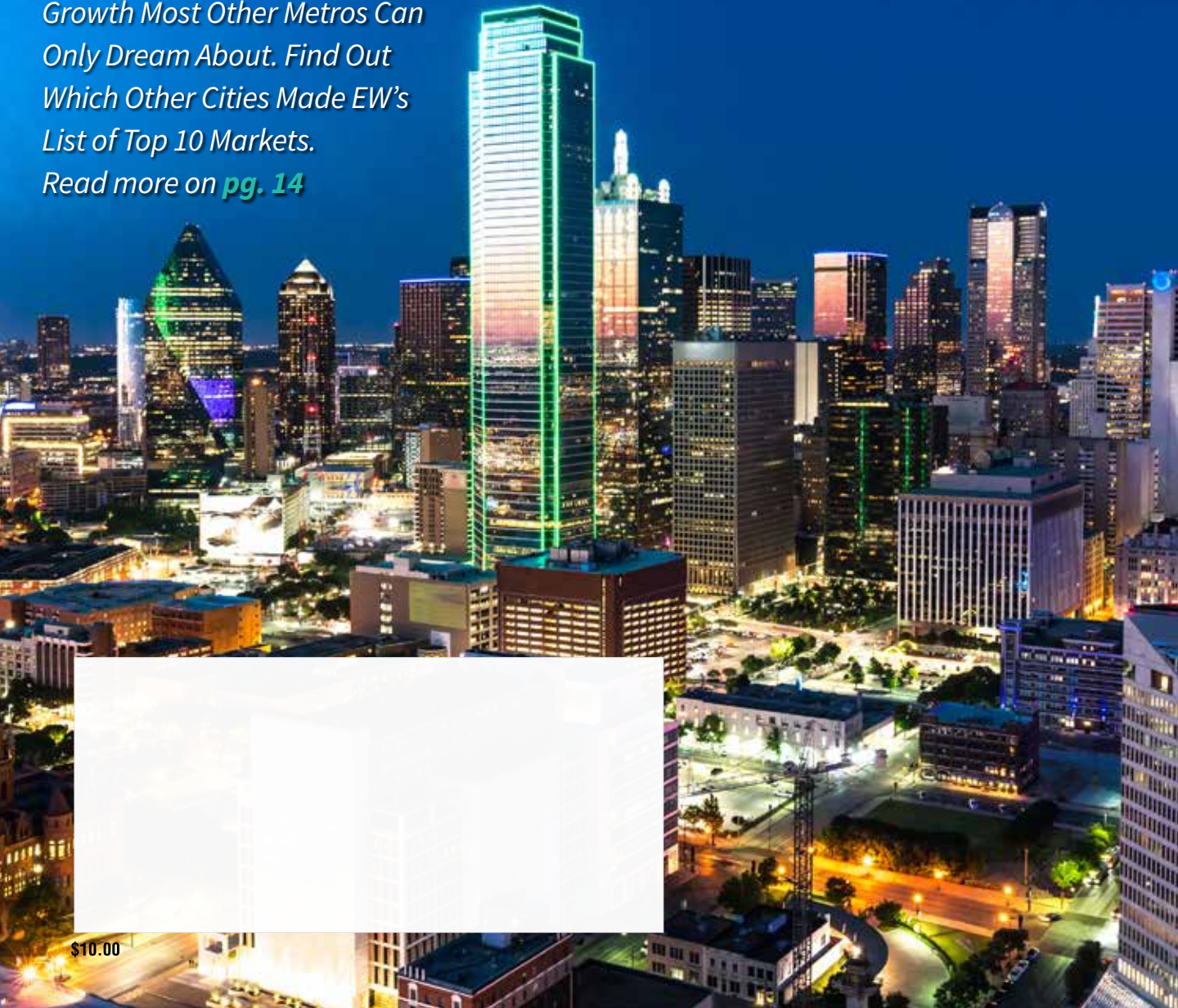
Electrical Wholesaling®

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THE INDEPENDENT
VOICE OF ELECTRICAL
DISTRIBUTION

THE DALLAS ELECTRICAL MARKET

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List of Top 10 Markets.
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Making the right connections

The Contractor Connection Revisited

It may be time to forge that elusive link between the business systems of electrical distributors and electrical contractors.

At the recent IDEA E-Biz conference in Nashville, there was some serious talk about what has been for years one of the most elusive goals in the electrical e-business arena — linking distributor’s ERP systems with electrical contractors’ business systems so they are both using the same product and pricing data.

IDEA is open to all sorts of new ideas these days, and figuring out a secure way to have electrical contractors work through their distributors to access the clean, accurate product data stored and updated in the IDEA Connector (formerly the Industry Data Warehouse (IDW)) may be under consideration.

There’s definitely a closer link between IDEA and the electrical contractor community, and it makes good business sense for both parties. Josh Bone, the executive director of ELECTRI International, the research arm of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA), has a seat on IDEA’s Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and he gave a solid presentation at the IDEA E-Biz conference on the challenges contractors are having with procurement, materials management and the impact the worker shortage is having on contractor productivity and the promise of preassembled electrical products and systems (See article on page 28). Theoretically, linking contractors to the IDEA Connector through their distribution partner would slash the time spent waiting

By Jim Lucy, Editor-In-Chief

on quotations, cut down on inaccurate product and pricing data for contractors and help them operate more efficiently by streamlining their procurement process.

Linking electrical contractors’ business systems more closely to electrical distributors’ ERP systems isn’t exactly



a new idea. Industry veterans may remember TradePower, and how back in the dot-com era it strived to help distributors link its Trade Service product data loaded in their ERP systems with the Traser pricing and product database that it sold to electrical contractors using the Estimation estimating package, which it also owned.

A 2003 *Electrical Wholesaling* article about TradePower’s efforts with its PowerPack and PowerStation software said, “Probably the most important feature of the system is the fact that both systems use the same product database, mak-

ing electronic translation much easier. Estimation uses the Traser pricing and product database published by Trade Service, which was for years the sister company of Trade Service Systems. The product database produced by Trade Service is also compatible with Trade Service Systems business software for electrical distributors.”

TradePower’s efforts never gained the expected traction, but Trade Service is still very much a believer in the potential of an electronic connection between the business systems of contractors and distributors.

Now owned by the Trimble construction information conglomerate, Trade Service has for quite some time offered another service with a similar goal — SupplierXchange. The Trade Service website describer that service as a “digital pricing and procurement hub that connects distributors with their contractor customers where they work —using automation to remove friction from common supply chain activities such as price requests and purchase orders submissions.”

It will be interesting to see how and when this link may be reformed. One of the biggest challenges may be the fact that so many electrical contractors are very small companies that have not yet invested much in their digital commerce capabilities. By some industry estimates, the vast majority of the 70,000-plus electrical contracting firms in the United States have annual revenues of less than \$25 million. Many of the largest contractors are already using sophisticated estimating, procurement and materials management systems. They may be ready for the link with distributors.

IDEA may be in the best position to provide this link. It has a leadership team in place that’s willing to listen to new ideas and they are not afraid to try consider new markets and ventures. Forging a link to electrical contractors’ business systems may be an idea whose time has finally come. **EW**

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READ THE REPORT

Office Market Still Reeling from Work-at-Home Trend

The recent news that investment banker Goldman Sachs wants all employees in its offices five days a week highlights just how quickly and dramatically the office environment has moved toward hybrid office strategies or remote officing since the COVID crisis — and its long-term impact on the demand for commercial office space.

The office market is one of the larger construction niches for distributors, manufacturers, contractors and reps, and these companies feel the pain directly when demand for office space dries up in their local markets. New office construction accounts for 5% of all new construction project spending, according to the Department of Census' June 2023 data.

As more companies have shifted to hybrid work-from-home policies or 100% remote offices, many companies are slashing their office footprints or not renewing leases. A *Wall Street Journal* article offered several recent examples of large firms making major cutbacks in office space. It said Aon is reducing office space in Chicago by 25% to 300,000 sq ft and that IBM slashed its Austin, TX, office space from 640,000 sq ft to 320,000 sq ft. The article also said Fluor is making an even more dramatic

cut in the Houston area, cutting its office space in that market 70% to 308,000 sq ft, “in part because the company no longer assigns cubicles to employees who work on the road.”

While many companies are asking more employees to come into the office more often, indicators exist that the percentage of people actually working in corporate offices is still quite small. Kastle, a manufacturer of office access controls uses data from customers in 2,600 buildings in 138 cities to monitor office occupancy. The most recent Kastle Back to Work Barometer, a weekly occupancy report, showed that the average occupancy rate in its 10 top cities is only 47.2%. Only four cities — Dallas (52%); Houston (59.4%); Chicago (51.25); and Austin (56.5%) — have an occupancy rate of more than 50%.

The news in the office market is not all bad, as some segments, like Class A building that feature the latest in amenities, actually still enjoy fairly robust demand for new space. These buildings often offer the latest in green building technologies, flexible meeting facilities and on-site food services. There also appears to be a fairly robust market for retrofitting of existing office space to accommodate the new hybrid officing strategies.

CONSTRUCTION EMPLOYMENT STAYS STRONG THROUGH JULY

Construction employment increased in 226 of 358 metro areas between July 2022 and July 2023, according to an analysis by the Associated General Contractors of America of new government employment data. Association officials said demand for many types of construction remained strong in most parts of the country, but firms still have hundreds of thousands of unfilled construction positions.

“Demand for construction projects remains strong nationwide and most metros have continued to add construction jobs in the past year,” said Ken Simonson, the association’s chief economist in the press release. “But there were 378,000 unfilled job openings in construction at the end of July, which suggests that even more markets would have posted year-over-year employment increases if there were enough qualified workers to fill the openings.”

Total construction employment increased +2.5% to 8.2 million workers, according to the preliminary July data published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Electrical contractors account for an estimated 13% of that total, or 1.06 million workers.

The Dallas-Plano-Irving, TX metropolitan statistical area (MSA) added the most construction jobs (18,100 jobs or +12%), followed by New York City (13,400 jobs, +9%); Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA MSA (9,700 jobs, +12%); and the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA MSA (6,600 jobs,

+4%). The largest percentage gains were in the Yuba City, CA MSA (+13%, 400 jobs) and Corvallis, OR MSA (+13%, 200 jobs); followed by gains of +12% in Dallas-Plano-Irving; Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro; and Clarksville, TN-KY MSA (500 jobs).

Construction jobs declined over the year in 80 metro areas and were unchanged in 52 areas. The largest job loss occurred in the Miami-Miami Beach-Kendall, FL MSA. (-4,100 jobs, -8%), followed by the Nassau County-Suffolk County, NY MSA (-2,300 jobs, -3%); the St. Louis, MO-IL MSA (-2,100 jobs, -3%); and the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale, CA MSA (-2,100 jobs, -1%). The largest percentage decrease, -13%, occurred in the Kankakee, IL MSA (-200 jobs), followed by -9% losses in the Huntington-Ashland, WV-KY-OH MSA (-1,400 jobs); the Binghamton, NY MSA (-400 jobs); and the Pittsfield, MA MSA (-200 jobs).

Although the August data for local markets is not yet available, BLS’ August national-level data showed that construction employment in August totaled 7,993,000, seasonally adjusted, an increase of 22,000 from July and 212,000 or +2.7% from a year earlier. That outpaced total nonfarm job growth of +2% over 12 months. Nonresidential construction firms — nonresidential building and specialty trade contractors along with heavy and civil engineering construction firms — added 21,000 employees for the month and 169,700 (+3.7%) since July 2022.

Dunes Point Capital Buys NY's Warshaw Supply

Dunes Point Capital, Rye, NY, has acquired Warshaw Supply, Ridgewood, NY, a supplier of electrical products for commercial and multi-family end markets. Warshaw's brands include South Conduit, Global Manufacturing, Aly Cable and Nav-Tech. Warshaw has four facilities in New York; Hauppauge, NY; and Allentown, PA and employs approximately 80 people.

According to Warshaw's website, www.warshawinc.com, the company was founded more than 40 years ago by Bob Warshaw to provide electrical/datacom products and has grown over the years into a full-service agency handling both commodity and specification manufacturers. The company has two facilities — a 100,000-sq-ft headquarters and warehouse in Ridgewood, NY, and a new 45,000-sq-ft location in Piscataway, NJ.

The company serves companies such as National Grid, Consolidated Edison Co. of New York, Public Service Gas and Electric of New Jersey, General Public Utilities, Niagara Mohawk, Metropolitan Transit Authority, Port Authority of NY/NJ, engineering contractors, export houses and government agencies. McKinnon Bookhout Partners, Chicago, advised Dunes Point Capital in the acquisition of Warshaw, the first acquisition in a platform build in the electrical products space.

Flynn & Reynolds Expands in Upstate NY

Flynn & Reynolds Agency Inc., Tewksbury, MA, a manufacturers' representative serving the New England market for more than 40 years, acquired Mills Talbot Co., a NEMRA agent that has served upstate New York since 1947. Mills Talbot will continue to operate under their current name and sales team, with Gregg Adams and Tom Talbot working with Ed Scannapieco, Flynn & Reynolds VP-Sales Operations, to oversee the integration and resource investment for future growth.

Bryan Lally, president of Flynn & Reynolds, said in the press release that the two companies have similar business philosophies and significant synergies across the manufacturers they represent.

"The New England and upstate New York markets are merging on multiple levels, and this presents us an opportunity to provide our services to the manufacturer and distributor in a more cohesive manner," he said in the release. "We are thrilled to be able to enter the trade area with the reputation and respect that Gregg Adams and Tom Talbot have developed over the past decades and plan to only build on their success."

Dan Sciuilli joined the Mills Talbot team as VP-Sales for the upstate New York market. Sciuilli brings more than 12 years of experience with the Eaton sales team serving the same customer base as Mills Talbot.

EW NEWS ANALYSIS

Rockwell Gets Into Robots

Rockwell Automation Inc., Milwaukee, WI, plans to acquire Ontario, Canada-based Clearpath Robotics, a manufacturer of robots for industrial applications.

The release said Rockwell believes autonomous mobile robots (AMRs) are the next frontier in industrial automation and transformation, and that this acquisition will help Rockwell bring its Connected Enterprise strategy to life. "Rockwell and Clearpath together will simplify the difficult and labor-intensive task of moving materials and product through an orchestrated and safe system to optimize operations throughout the entire manufacturing facility," said Blake Moret, chairman and CEO, Rockwell Automation in the press release.

Rockwell Automation said in the press release that combined with its continuing partnerships in fixed robotic arms, solutions such as Independent Cart Technology, and long-time focus on programmable logic controllers (PLCs), the addition of Clearpath's OTTO Motors' AMR capabilities will strengthen its portfolio of advanced material handling equipment.

Siemens Buys Provider of EV Chargers for Buses & Trucks

Siemens AG signed an agreement to acquire Heliox, a Netherlands-based technology leader in fast charging solutions for e-bus and e-truck fleets and passenger vehicles. The acquisition will complement Siemens' existing eMobility charging portfolio, adding products and solutions for DC fast charging focused on e-bus and e-truck fleets.

"This is an important milestone that adds value to our fast-growing eMobility charging business. In addition to expanding our offering, we see digitalization and software potential with regard to energy and depot management and services," said Matthias Rebellius, member of the managing board of Siemens AG and chief executive officer of Smart Infrastructure, in the press release.

Siemens eMobility business offers IoT-enabled hardware, software and services for AC and DC charging from 11kW to 300kW for a broad range of applications. Heliox employs approximately 330 people.

VITAL STATISTICS

CONSTRUCTION

New Construction Put-in-Place (\$ billions, SAAR)

	Jul '23	Jun '23 ₂	Mo. % Change	Jul '22	YTY % Change
Total Construction	1,972.60	1,958.90	0.7	1,869.3	5.5
Total Private Construction₁	1,548.90	1,533.70	1.0	1,488.9	4
Residential	879	866.8	1.4	929.7	-5.5
New single family	389.9	379.1	2.8	459.8	-15.2
New multifamily	133.4	133.1	0.2	107	24.6
Nonresidential	670	666.9	0.5	559.2	19.8
Lodging	22.7	22.9	-0.7	18.8	20.9
Office	84.1	83.9	0.3	77.0	9.2
Commercial	123.7	122.8	0.8	121	2.3
Health care	47.8	48.3	-1.1	43.1	11.1
Educational	22.3	22.3	0	19.00	17.7
Religious	3.1	3.2	-2.2	3.1	-1.2
Amusement and recreation	15.7	15.7	0.1	16.2	-2.8
Transportation	19.5	19.2	1.1	17.1	14
Communication	24.3	24.1	1	24.5	-0.6
Power	102.9	102.8	0.1	99.7	3.2
Electric	84.5	84.1	0.5	79.8	5.9
Manufacturing	201	198.7	1.1	117.2	71.4
Total Public Construction (\$ billions) ₂	423.7	425.2	-0.4	380.4	11.4
Residential	10.1	9.9	2.6	9.9	2.3
Nonresidential	413.5	415.3	-0.4	370.5	11.6
Office	14.6	14.1	3	13	11.6
Commercial	4.4	4.5	-2.6	4.4	-0.6
Health care	12.6	12.6	0	11.4	10.4
Educational	89.8	89.7	0.1	82.7	8.6
Public safety	13	13	0.4	12	8.3
Amusement and recreation	16.7	16.9	-0.9	13.8	21.1
Transportation	43.6	44.5	-1.9	41.1	6.1
Power	13.2	13	2	9.8	34.7
Highway and street	128.1	128.9	-0.6	114.3	12.1
Sewage and waste disposal	38.9	39.3	-1.2	32.9	18
Water supply	26.4	26.2	0.7	24	9.7
Conservation and development	11	11.4	-4.2	9.4	16

	Aug '23 ₁	Jul '23 ₂	Mo. % Change	Aug '22	YTY % Change
Housing Starts (SAAR)					
Total (thousands of units)	1,283	1,447	-11.3%	1,505	-14.8%
Single-family (thousands of units)	941	983	-4.3%	919	2.4%
Multi-family (thousands of units)	334	453	-26.3%	566	-41.0%

EMPLOYMENT WAGE & PRICE STATISTICS

	Mo.	Latest Month	Mo. % Change	Year ago	YTY % Change
Employment, Electrical Contractors (thousands) ₄	JUL	1044.3	0.4	965.4	8.2
Hourly wage, Electrical Contractors (\$) ₄	JUL	36.54	0.4	32.03	14.1
Copper prices (cents per pound)	AUG	376.34	-1.9	439.80	-14.4

INDUSTRIAL MARKET

	Mo.	Latest Month	Mo. % Change	Year ago	YTY % Change
Electrical Mfrs' Shipments (\$ millions)	JUL	4,688	2.0	3,636	28.9
Electrical Mfrs' Inventories (\$ millions SA) ₂	JUL	9,909	0.7	7,106	39.4
Electrical Mfrs' Inventory-to-Shipments ratio	JUL	2.114	-1.3	1.954	8.2
Electrical Mfrs' New Orders (\$ millions SA) ₂	JUL	4,721	3.6	3,988	18.4
Machine Tool Orders (\$ millions) ₅	JUL	343.45	-13.0	476.95	-28.0
Industrial Capacity Utilization (percent, SA)	AUG	77.89	0.0 pts.	77.10	1.0 pts.

Footnotes: 1 - preliminary; 2 - revised; 3 - includes residential improvements; Z - less than 0.005 percent; SA - seasonally adjusted; SAAR - seasonally adjusted annual rate. **Sources:** Construction Put-in-Place statistics - Department of Commerce; Housing starts - Department of Commerce's Census Bureau; Electrical contractor employment numbers and hourly wage - Department of Labor; Copper prices - *Metals Week*; Electrical manufacturers' shipment data - Department of Commerce; Machine Tool Orders - Association for Manufacturing Technology; Industrial Capacity Utilization - Federal Reserve Board; and Purchasing Managers Index - Institute for Supply Management.

Note: Additional economic data relevant to the electrical industry is available on a bi-weekly basis by subscribing to *Electrical Marketing* newsletter. For subscription information see www.electricalmarketing.com.

EBCI SLIPS IN JULY

The current conditions component has not shown evidence of sustained growth since early 2022. After settling on the threshold value of 50 points last month, the current gauge once again slipped in July, dropping seven points to 42.9 points, signaling "worse" conditions overall compared to June.

The ElectroIndustry Business Conditions Index (EBCI) is a monthly survey of senior executives at electrical manufacturers published by the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA), Rosslyn, VA. Any score over the 50-point level indicates a greater number of panelists see conditions improving than see them deteriorating.

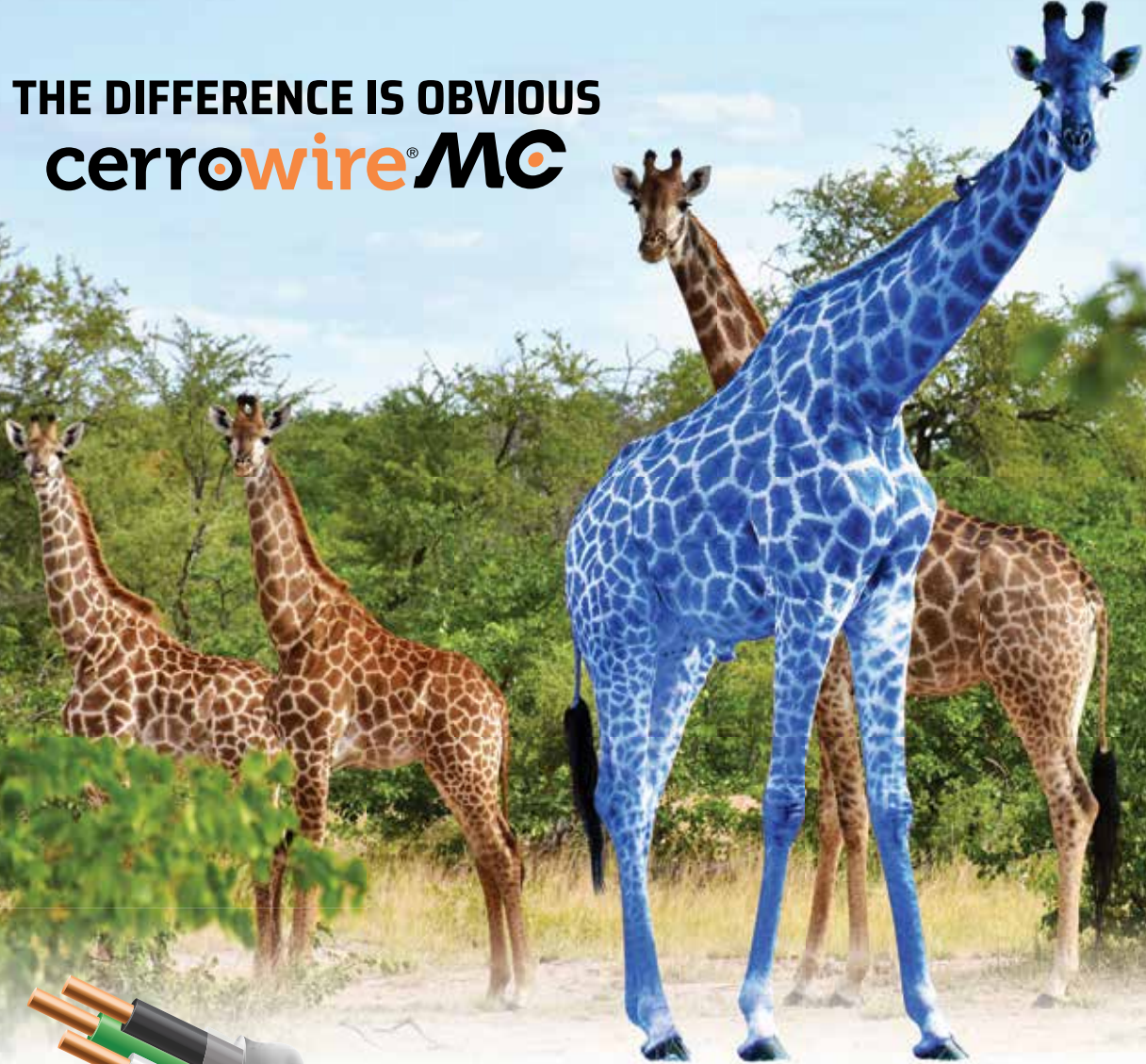
Matching June's reading of 53.6 points, the July future conditions component marked the first time since February 2022 that this six-months ahead metric remained in growth territory for two consecutive periods. A run-up in the share of respondents expecting "unchanged" conditions, combined with a still robust proportion of those anticipating "better" conditions helped buoy the outlook indicator. Cracks, such as distributors reducing inventories, have started to appear, but the "electrification boom" supported at least one respondent's positive expectations.

Despite this month's underwater reading, some bright spots emerged in the comments with reports of strength in markets such as infrastructure and utility upgrades.

The turmoil in the housing market continued in August with multi-family starts dropping a whopping -26.3% and now tracking at more than -40% below last year. Single-family starts also dropped, but not as precipitously with a 4.3% decrease from July. The future may be brighter in the housing market, as single-family building permits, a popular leading indicator, were up +2% to 949,000 for August.

As has been the case for most 2023, the industrial market continued on a record-setting pace. Private construction spending hit \$201 billion in July for industrial facilities, a +117% increase for the month and up +71.4% over July 2022.

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*PATENT PENDING

Blazer Electric's Annual Golf Tournament Raises \$40,000 to Fund Training for IEC and JATC



Blazer Electric Supply Co., Colorado Springs, CO, recently hosted its 11th Annual Blazer Benefit Golf Tournament at the Bear Dance Golf Club in Larkspur, CO. This year's event took in a record-breaking total of \$40,000 to bolster the local training initiatives of the Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC) and the Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC). Thanks to the generosity and dedication of participants and sponsors, a cumulative sum of \$290,250 has now been raised to provide crucial support for scholarships, tools, training materials and equipment in both apprenticeship programs.

The IEC and JATC apprenticeship programs play a pivotal role in nurturing the skills and knowledge necessary for a thriving career in the electrical construction trade. With a primary focus on recruiting

and preparing a skilled labor force to meet the evolving needs of Colorado's electrical contractors, the local IEC and JATC programs offer training and certification opportunities to candidates from diverse technical and non-technical vocations.

Through these initiatives, aspiring individuals become accomplished electricians or journeymen, enabling them to deliver valuable professional services to the region's electrical industry. In 2023, the contributions and fundraisers from the Blazer Benefit Golf Tournament facilitated scholarships for more than 30 southern Colorado students, helping them successfully complete the 2022/2023 academic year.

Participating individuals and companies had the opportunity to sponsor holes, while players generously donated funds for advantages on the course such

as purchasing mulligans or utilizing a golf ball gun. The funds raised through these endeavors significantly contribute to the tuition funds, assisting students in their pursuit of a fulfilling career in electrical work. The following companies were sponsors for the event:

Title: Casey Bergquist Inc., Atkore, Ideal Industries, Legrand, Milbank, Priority Wire and Spike

Master: Eaton, Electrical Lines/Service Wire, Ewing-Foley, Southwire and The Lighting Agency

Journeyman: ASA Electrical Solutions, Burndy, Hubbell Wiring Devices, Illumination Systems, i-Pro Martin, MH Lighting, Milwaukee Tool and Omni Cable

Apprentice: C. Wright & Associates, CET & Associates, Diode LED, Highland Sales, Keystone Technologies, Mountain States Agency, Nora Lighting, Picoma Industries, Satco and The Lighting Group

Trevor Blazer, general manager of Blazer Electric Supply, said in the press release, "The Blazer Benefit Golf Tournament not only provides scholarships but also ignites passion and ambition in those embarking on a career in the electrical field. We extend our deepest gratitude to all the individuals and companies who join us year after year to sponsor holes and donate generously. Together, we pave the way for bright futures, bridging the gap between apprenticeship and rewarding careers in the electrical trade."

Got an Item for Bulletin Board?

It's easy to have your company included in the pages of *Electrical Wholesaling's* Bulletin Board. It's as simple as submitting a description and photographs.

Some of the subjects covered in Bulletin Board include:

- Charitable Events/Donations
- Industry Awards/Recognitions
- Distributor Support/Training
- Product Promotions
- Contests
- Ground Breakings

Send pertinent information to Michael Morris, Associate Editor, 10955 Lowell Ave., 7th Floor, Overland Park, KS 66209. Or you may e-mail information to mmorris@endeavorb2b.com. All electronic photos should be in "jpg," "tif" or "eps" format at no less than 300 dots per inch. Questions? Call (848) 205-1998.

Schaedler YESCO Announces Plans & Structure for Expansion Into Western PA & Eastern OH

Schaedler Yesco Distribution, Harrisburg, PA, has announced plans to support its growing western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio markets.

Last May, the company announced plans to open a 90,000-sq-ft facility in Lower Burrell, PA (Westmoreland County). Since the announcement, the building has been gutted and rebuilt to support a new counter area, a larger inventory and wire services, a large conference and training room and additional square footage to support new services. The new space will serve as both a local branch and a regional distribution center. It's expected to be operational in October. Todd Smith, distribution center manager, and Matt Snyder, assistant warehouse manager, will manage the new RDC.



Left to right:
 Matt Evans, Regional Vice President
 Jon Blanchette, Outside Sales Manager
 Gary Meanor, Director of Branch Sales
 Brett Sanders, Construction Solutions Manager
 Todd Smith, Distribution Center Manager
 Matt Snyder, Assistant Warehouse Manager
 Construction of 90,000-square-foot Regional Distribution Center in Lower Burrell, PA

In addition to the physical infrastructure to support the territory, Schaedler Yesco has restructured its sales team to enhance local leadership and focus on the market's specific needs. Matt Evans, regional VP, oversees the company's westernmost market and is responsible for the development and execution of sales strategies while fostering relationships with key customers and vendors.

Evans is supported by Jon Blanchette, outside sales manager, and Gary Meanor, director of branch sales. Both offer extensive knowledge and experience in the western Pennsylvania and Ohio marketplace. Brett Sanders, construction solutions manager, oversees the Construction Services team of local lighting specialists, gear specialists, and project coordinators in support of their contractor customers.

"Supporting the market is more than just having local product availability," said Farrah Mittel, president, in the press release. "It's the whole package. It's having local, experienced team members who can work directly with customers to meet their specific needs. It's being an agile, independent distributor who isn't mired in red tape when developing unique solutions. And it's having a solid foundation to make necessary investments to support growth."

On the heels of its five-branch acquisition from YESCO, the company was named a Top Growing Company in Pennsylvania for the 10th time. "The western Pennsylvania and Ohio market offers a great opportunity to us, and we are poised to offer it the service and support it's been needing."



Crawford Electric Supply Expands in Dallas-Fort Worth Metro

Crawford Electric Supply/Sonepar is expanding in the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area with a new location in Denton, TX. It's Crawford's seventh location in the area.

"This branch allows us to better serve customers on the north side of the DFW Metroplex," said Brian Young, regional VP, in the press release. "We are focused on making things convenient for our customers, from the physical location to the optional self-pick service model. We have the team and the supply to help local contractors save time and keep running smoothly." In the Dallas-Fort Worth metro, Crawford operates in Dallas, Irving, Fort Worth, Duncanville, Mesquite, Denton and Decatur, with McKinney soon to follow.

INDUSTRY EVENTS

October 18-20, 2023

AD ELECTRICAL NORTH AMERICAN MEETING

Dallas; Affiliated Distributors
www.adhq.org

November 6-8, 2023

NAED EASTERN CONFERENCE

Marco Island, FL; www.naed.org

November 7-9, 2023

NEMA ANNUAL MEETING

Manalapan, FL; www.nema.org

January 15-17, 2024

NAED WESTERN CONFERENCE

Austin, TX; www.naed.org

Jan. 30- Feb. 2, 2024

NEMRA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Las Vegas, National Electrical
Manufacturers Representatives
Association (NEMRA);
www.nemra.org

Jan. 30- Feb. 1, 2024

NAW EXECUTIVE SUMMIT

Washington, DC, National Association of
Wholesaler-Distributors (NAW);
www.nemra.org

February 19-21 2024

NAED SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE

Dallas, TX; www.naed.org

March 19-20, 2024

LEDUCATION TRADE SHOW & CONFERENCE

New York; www.leducation.org

May 21-23, 2024

NAED ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Austin, TX; www.naed.org



DSG Opens Mankato, MN, Branch

Dakota Supply Group (DSG), Plymouth, MN, celebrated the official grand opening of its new Mankato branch on July 19.

Paul Kennedy, DSG's president & CEO said in the press release that the Mankato branch is DSG's 54th location. The company now has 13 locations and more than 300 employee owners in Minnesota serving customers in the electrical, plumbing, HVAC, on-site sewer, water, well and waterworks markets. The 125-year-old company's electrical business is ranked #19 on *Electrical Wholesaling's* 2023 Top 150 ranking.

OmniCable Opens New Supercenter in Fort Worth, TX

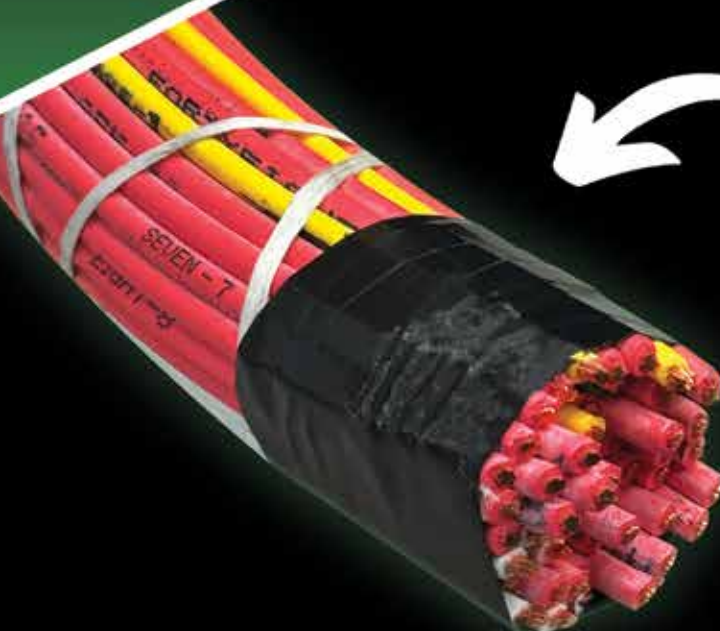
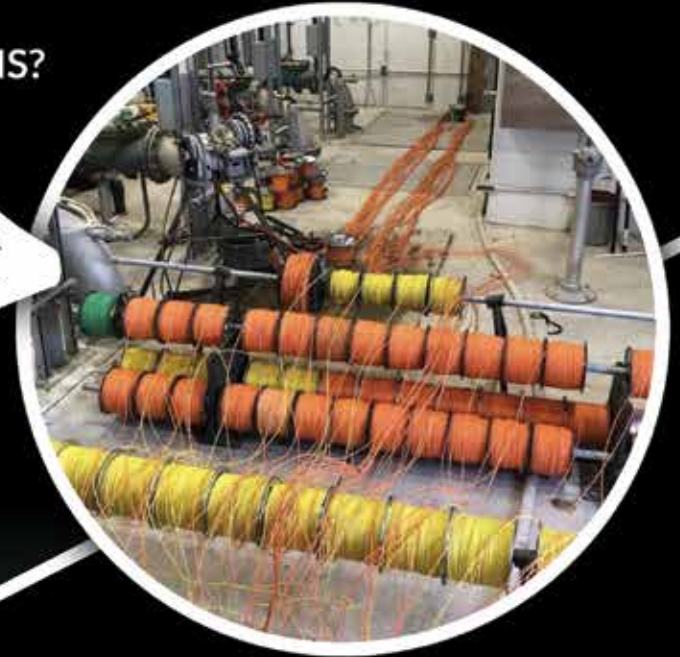
OmniCable, West Chester, PA, opened a new supercenter in Fort Worth, TX. The Fort Worth location is OmniCable's newest supercenter; Chicago opened in 2022 and Reno in May, 2023. OmniCable's supercenters are large facilities with large amounts of aluminum, cord and commercial products, in addition to its traditional industrial inventory.

The 220,000-sq-ft supercenter offers distributors paralleling and respooling services, as well local access to millions of dollars of wire and cable and electrical. In addition, Fort Worth provides fast will-call availability and same-day shipping.

"This location provides us additional coverage and is a great addition to our existing distribution centers in Houston, TX, and Odessa, TX," said Brad Cook, regional manager (Houston, Odessa, and Fort Worth locations), in the press release.

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10 Local Markets to Watch in 2024

These 10 local markets have powered through 2023's turbulent business conditions and look like good bets for solid growth in 2024.



The \$1-billion, 18-acre Nashville Yards development under construction will be anchored by a 4,000-capacity, state-of-the-art country music venue; an upscale eight-screen cinema; more than 1,000 hotel rooms; restaurants and stores; 275,000 sq ft of Class A office space; and three residential towers.

When *Electrical Wholesaling's* editors sat down with the key economic growth indicators that we feel best measure the sales potential of local markets, this year we focused on one key filter: which Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs) were cranking along at double the national rate of growth. Even with that high bar, we had a tough time limiting our picks to just 10 local market areas because quite a few MSAs are enjoying impressive growth. The Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA MSA and Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA MSA come immediately to mind, because they also had stellar results when measured against most of our key indicators:

- Estimated sales potential using *Electrical Wholesaling's* tried-and-true sales-per-employee multipliers from our 2023 Market Planning Guide

By Jim Lucy, Editor-in-Chief

- Electrical contractor and industrial employment
- Population growth from 2017 to 2022 and from 2021 to 2022
- Single-family and multi-family building permits
- Unemployment rates
- Large construction projects underway or on the drawing boards

In addition to these parameters, the magazine's editorial staff considers market idiosyncrasies and like to offer a mix of large, medium and small metros to better represent the nation as a whole, instead of just picking the mega-markets with the most sales. Each local market has a unique economic profile and economic drivers to consider. For instance, the fast-growing MSAs along Florida's Gulf Coast rely on double-digit population growth to fuel demand for new vacation homes, senior housing and single-family homes for new residents from colder climates. Unfortunately, some of the growth of these markets over the past year must be attributed to reconstruction efforts from last fall's Hurricane Ian.

In industrially oriented markets like the Elkhart-Goshen, IN, MSA, you must watch industrial employment data from the U.S. Census Bureau and look for news about plant expansions in that market's dominant recreational vehicle manufacturing industry. Ditto for Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI MSA and many other Michigan markets whose economic fortunes are tied to the amount of industrial business flowing through Ford or General Motors auto plants.

It's also hard to compare the nation's largest metropolitan areas and the billions of dollars in sales potential with much smaller metros that may be growing at a double-digit growth rate but represent a fraction of the larger markets' potential electrical sales. According to *Electrical Marketing's* electrical sales potential data, 43 MSAs have at least \$1 billion in electrical sales potential and 28 markets could generate annual sales of between \$500 million and \$1 billion. Another 162 metros have an estimated annual sales potential of at least \$100 million. If you need market data on other local markets or all 50 states, it's available as part of a \$99 annual subscription to *Electrical Marketing* newsletter (www.electricalmarketing.com).

On the following pages are 10 local markets that stood out because of superior growth rates and electrical sales potential.

AUSTIN

Austin-Round Rock, TX, MSA

SALES ESTIMATES (\$ Millions)

Electrical Sales Estimate 2Q 2023: \$1,307.4 million
QTQ % Change: +8.2% / YOY % Change: +4.3%
Electrical Contractor \$ Potential Estimate: \$851.3 million
Industrial \$ Potential Estimate: \$194.6 million

BUILDING PERMITS

Single-Family: 9,202 (YOY -35.5% / 5,062 units)
Multi-Family: 10,543 (YOY -41.1% / -5,092 units)

POPULATION GROWTH

Population Estimate 2022: 2,421,115
Net Migration: 62,895 / New Residents per Day: 172.6
2017-2022 # Change: 305,116 / 2017-2022 % Change: +14.42%

It's no surprise to see the Austin-Round Rock-Georgetown, TX, MSA make *EW's* list of the 10 hottest electrical markets, as the city's downtown area and surrounding suburbs are still enjoying huge growth. At an estimated \$1.2 billion in total sales potential, Austin is a much smaller market than Dallas, but it's experiencing the same +8% quarterly growth in potential, along with an impressive +5.1% increase to \$194 million in estimated industrial sales potential. Its residential growth profile is also similar to Dallas in that permits are down significantly YOY, but its 9,202 single-family permits



through July rank it #7 amongst all U.S. metropolitan areas. The construction of Tesla's Austin gigafactory stole many of the headlines over the past few years, but another project will be making news soon — the \$2.4-billion Austin School District modernization program that's approved and in the planning stages.

Austin is also one of the nation's leaders in population growth and welcomed more than 305,000 new residents from 2017 to 2022 (+14.4%). An estimated 173 new residents move to Austin each day.

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CHARLOTTE

Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC, MSA

SALES ESTIMATES (\$ Millions)

Electrical Sales Estimate 2Q 2023: \$1,344.6 million
QTQ % Change: +5.4% / YOY % Change: +2.8%
Electrical Contractor \$ Potential Estimate: \$784.1 million
Industrial \$ Potential Estimate: \$291.6 million

BUILDING PERMITS

Single-Family: 11,174 (YOY -13.4% / -1,724 units)
Multi-Family: 5,910 (YOY +115.2% / +718 units)

POPULATION GROWTH

Population Estimate 2022: 2,756,069
Net Migration: 48,700 / New Residents per Day: 133.4
2017-2022 # Change: 203,368 / 2017-2022 % Change: +7.97%

The Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC, MSA continues building on its position as one of the Southeast's powerhouse electrical markets with a +5.4% quarterly increase in Q2 2023 to \$1.34 billion in estimated sales potential. That's good enough to move into the #29 position when compared to all MSAs. Long respected as a major banking and financial center, Charlotte has been attracting thousands of new residents for well over a decade, and the metro saw its population grow by more than 203,000 residents — roughly +78% — from

2017 to 2022. Last year, the metro added an estimated 133 new residents per day.

Along with being a Top 10 market in population growth over that period, it's also ranked as one of the 10 largest markets for both single-family and multi-family building permits. Through July, single-family permits were down -13.4% to 11,174 YTD, but multi-family permits were up +115.2% to 5,910, compared to 2022. One of the larger projects underway in the city is the \$365-million Queensbridge Collective Office Tower.

DALLAS

Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX, MSA

SALES ESTIMATES (\$ Millions)

Electrical Sales Estimate 2Q 2023: \$4,172.3 million
 QTQ % Change: +8.3% / YOY % Change: +5.7%
 Electrical Contractor \$ Potential Estimate: \$2,525.0 million
 Industrial \$ Potential Estimate: \$812.8 million

BUILDING PERMITS

Single-Family: 24,088 (YOY -18.8% / -5,585 units)
 Multi-Family: 14,374 (YOY -25.7% / -4,977 units)

POPULATION GROWTH

Population Estimate 2022: 7,943,685
 Net Migration: 170,396 / New Residents per Day: 466.8
 2017-2022 # Change: 605,978
 2017-2022 % Change: +8.26%

Over the past year, the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX, MSA has by many measures been the fastest-growing metro in the United States. Its estimated \$4.2 billion in total sales were up an impressive +8.3% over 1Q 2023, and electrical contractors in the market are hiring like crazy. In total, they have over 32,054 workers, up +6.7% over last year.

While building permits are down in the metro over last year, homebuilders still pulled 24,088 single-family permits through 2Q 2023 — more than any other Metropolitan Statistical Area



except for the Houston metro. And with a 605,978-increase in population from 2017 to 2022, it's one of the nation's leaders in population gains. The metro has an estimated 467 new residents moving in each day.

The Dallas economy has a more diverse mix of businesses than Houston, which is heavily tied to the fortunes of the oil business. Underway in Frisco is the \$3-billion Mix project, and in June GM announced plans for a \$500-million auto factory expansion.

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A pretty little college town nestled in the hills of north-west Arkansas may seem like an unlikely candidate to make a list of the fastest-growing electrical markets in the United States. But the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR, MSA, which also includes the Bentonville, AR, headquarters of Walmart, checked all of the boxes for *EW*'s consideration. Through 2Q 2023, the total electrical potential of this market area was growing at more than twice the quarterly and annual rate on a percent basis of the state of Arkansas and the United States. With just over 2,000 electrical contractor employees,

FAYETTEVILLE

Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers, AR-MO, MSA

SALES ESTIMATES (\$ Millions)

Electrical Sales Estimate 2Q 2023: \$312.8 million
 QTQ % Change: +10.2% / YOY % Change: +7.9%
 Electrical Contractor \$ Potential Estimate: \$164.9 million
 Industrial \$ Potential Estimate: \$85.3 million

BUILDING PERMITS

Single-Family: 3,293 (YOY -8% / -287 units)
 Multi-Family: 791 (YOY -6.5% / -55 units)

POPULATION GROWTH

Population Estimate 2022: 576,403
 Net Migration: 13,438 / New Residents per Day: 36.8
 2017-2022 # Change: 60,299 / 2017-2022 % Change: +11.68%

it's one of the smaller MSAs in terms of contractor employment, but the Fayetteville region enjoyed an +11% YOY gain in contractor employment over 2Q 2022.

The MSA saw a +11.7% population increase from 2017 to 2022, adding 60,299 new residents, and last year it was attracting 37 new residents each day. Major employers include Walmart, which has 16,000 workers at its headquarters campus; Walmart suppliers that employ 6,000 workers in offices near the company's headquarters; and the University of Arkansas.

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▶ 57006

▶ 58300

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INDIANAPOLIS

Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN, MSA

SALES ESTIMATES (\$ Millions)

Electrical Sales Estimate 2Q 2023: \$1,123.4 million
 QTQ % Change: +10.4% / YOY % Change: +5.6%
 Electrical Contractor \$ Potential Estimate: \$639.4 million
 Industrial \$ Potential Estimate: \$259.3 million

BUILDING PERMITS

Single-Family: 3,996 (YOY -32.9% / -1,962 units)
 Multi-Family: 2,634 (YOY -7.8% / -222 units)

POPULATION GROWTH

Population Estimate 2022: 2,141,779
 Net Migration: 13,115 / New Residents per Day: 36
 2017-2022 # Change: 112,806 / 2017-2022 % Change: +5.56%

It's not often that a Midwestern city catches our eye as one of the fastest-growing cities in the United States, but the Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN, MSA, is blessed with some strong growth numbers. Ranked #37 with an estimated \$1.1 billion in sales, the market was growing at more than twice the national average through 2Q 2023. Sales estimates were up +10.4% on a quarterly basis and up over 2022 by a solid +5.6%.

While its residential construction data doesn't jump off the page like many Sunbelt metros, its 3,996 single-family permits



© Sean Pavone | Dreamstime

through July showed growth of +15.5% over 1Q 2023. Its 2,634 multi-family permits through July were down -7.8% (-222 permits) annual basis.

Population growth in the Indianapolis area is steady if unspectacular, with a +5.6% increase from 2017 to 2022 and 36 new residents moving into the market each day in 2022. Many are working at three of the city's largest employers — Eli Lilly, Cummins and Sales Force. The metro has developed into a hub for life sciences and along with Eli Lilly, Anthem, Roche Diagnostics and Corteva have offices in the area.

© Sean Pavone | Dreamstime



JACKSONVILLE

Jacksonville, FL, MSA

SALES ESTIMATES (\$ Millions)

Electrical Sales Estimate 2Q 2023: \$787.6 million
 QTQ % Change: +6.6% / YOY % Change: +4.5%
 Electrical Contractor \$ Potential Estimate: \$533.5 million
 Industrial \$ Potential Estimate: \$96.5 million

BUILDING PERMITS

Single-Family: 7,032 (YOY -22.7% / -2,068 units)
 Multi-Family: 5,290 (YOY -6.7% / -382 units)

POPULATION GROWTH

Population Estimate 2022: 1,675,668
 Net Migration: 34,642 / New Residents per Day: 94.9
 2017-2022 # Change: 168,774 / 2017-2022 % Change: +11.20%

While Jacksonville doesn't always make as much news as some of the larger metropolitan areas in the Sunshine State, it has solid growth numbers across the board. Jacksonville's estimated total sales potential increased +6.6% in 2Q 2023 to \$787.6 million over 1Q 2023, and it's up +4.5% YOY. While it's a smaller market population-wise than some of EW's other hot market picks, on a percent basis Jacksonville is growing faster. The metro now has 1.6 million residents, a +11.2% increase over the past five years.

All those new residents have sparked some decent permit numbers, although activity is down from last year. Through July of this year, builders had pulled 7,023 permits for single-family homes, (-22.7% YOY). The 5,290 count for multi-family permits was off -6.7% from July 2022. Some of the larger construction projects include the recently announced plans by Gateway Jax for a \$500-million mixed-use development downtown, and Hardwick at Ford on Bay, a \$150-million project with 300 apartment units along the St. John River.



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MYRTLE BEACH

Myrtle Beach-Conway-North Myrtle Beach, SC, MSA

SALES ESTIMATES (\$ Millions)

Electrical Sales Estimate 2Q 2023: \$178.8 million
 QTQ % Change: +9.9% / YOY % Change: +7.2%
 Electrical Contractor \$ Potential Estimate: \$128.7 million
 Industrial \$ Potential Estimate: \$14.3 million

BUILDING PERMITS

Single-Family: 6,693 (YOY -4.9% / -342 units)
 Multi-Family: 566 (YOY +67% / +227 units)

POPULATION GROWTH

Population Estimate 2022: 536,165
 Net Migration: 25,340 / New Residents per Day: 69
 2017-2022 # Change: 71,923
 2017-2022 % Change: +15.49%

While the Myrtle Beach-Conway-North Myrtle Beach, SC, MSA is the smallest of the metros in this year's ranking with an estimated electrical sales potential of \$178.8 million, it continues to attract new residents at a fast pace. Over the past five years, 71,923 new residents have moved into the area to enjoy the area's 60 miles of beaches called "the Strand." An estimated 69 new residents are moving into Myrtle Beach every day, and the steady increase in



population continues to create demand for new housing.

The permit numbers are mixed compared to 2022. At 6,693 units, single-family permits down -4.9%. Multi-family permits were up +67%. Overall, housing in this MSA has been growing steadily many years. Plans are underway for a big mixed-use project in downtown Myrtle Beach. The Arts & Innovation District at Ninth Ave North will include a new apartment building, performing arts center, restaurants and a gym.



NASHVILLE

Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN, MSA

SALES ESTIMATES (\$ Millions)

Electrical Sales Estimate 2Q 2023: \$1,064.8 million
 QTQ % Change: +8.0% / YOY % Change: +5.2%
 Electrical Contractor \$ Potential Estimate: \$617.5 million
 Industrial \$ Potential Estimate: \$234.3 million

BUILDING PERMITS

Single-Family: 8,669 (YOY -17% / -1,773 units)
 Multi-Family: 5,536 (YOY +109% / +2,892 units)

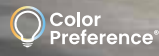
POPULATION GROWTH

Population Estimate 2022: 2,046,828
 Net Migration: 35,624 / New Residents per Day: 97.6
 2017-2022 # Change: 170,379 / 2017-2022 % Change: +9%

Been to Music City lately? Downtown is a forest of cranes and more big-time development is getting ready to kick off. Vanderbilt University has a \$500-million expansion project underway at its University Medical Center and the \$1-billion, 18-acre Nashville Yards development under construction will be anchored by a 4,000-capacity, state-of-the-art country music venue; an upscale eight-screen cinema; more than 1,000 hotel rooms; restaurants and stores; 275,000 sq ft of Class A office space; and three residential towers. Not to be outdone by these trophy jobs, the NFL's Tennessee

Titans are planning to break ground on to a \$2.1-billion new stadium in 2024.

All of this construction has pushed the Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro-Franklin, TN, MSA over the \$1-billion mark in estimated sales potential, and a solid +5.2% increase over our 2022 estimate. Single-family permits are down -17% over last year, but the MSA's 8,669 permits through July nailed down a Top 10 spot in homebuilder activity. Nashville is also enjoying a major population surge of 170,379 new residents since 2017, and an average of 98 new folks moving to Music City every day.



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ORLANDO

Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL, MSA

SALES ESTIMATES (\$ Millions)

Electrical Sales Estimate 2Q 2023: \$1,272.3 million
 QTQ % Change: +1.0% / YOY % Change: -1.0%
 Electrical Contractor \$ Potential Estimate: \$879.0 million
 Industrial \$ Potential Estimate: \$138.9 million

BUILDING PERMITS

Single-Family: 10,020 (-11.2%) / Multi-Family: 6,106 (-2.6%)

POPULATION GROWTH

Population Estimate 2022: 2,764,182
 Net Migration: 64,983 / New Residents per Day: 178
 2017-2022 # Change: 244,256 / 2017-2022 % Change: +9.7%

Orlando's I-4 corridor continues to attract hospitality, retail and commercial construction on a grand scale, and according to www.internationaldriveorlando.com, more than \$4 billion in development is planned near the area's major theme parks, including Walt Disney World, Universal Studios and SeaWorld.

Ranked #34 at \$1,272.3 million, the metro's total estimated sales aren't particularly large compared to several of the other markets *EW* picked out. The metro's sales potential logged a +1% quarterly increase in 2Q 2023. The future also looks bright in the residential market for the Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL MSA, as homebuilders pulled 10,020 single-family permits



and 6,106 multi-family permits through June, ranking quite high against all other MSAs. The metro also ranks high (#7) in population growth over the past five years, with 244,256 new residents moving in to soak up the sun.

Down the road, www.internationaldriveorlando.com says Universal Studios Orlando will be completing DreamWorks Animation Land and is building Universal Epic Universe, a new theme park with 2,000 hotel rooms. Other projects include the 300,000-sq-ft AREA15 immersive art experience and events center that will break ground in 2024; and Phase 2 of the Bainbridge World Center Apartments, which will include 464 units and be underway next year.



This sprawling metro continues to grow at an amazing pace. In addition to all the residential, retail, commercial and institutional growth, are several big-time industrial developments producing silicon chips and electric vehicles in the Valley of the Sun. Ranked #9 in total estimated electrical sales potential at \$2.51 billion, the Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ MSA has seen its population swell to more than 5 million since 2017. It's also one of the nation's leaders in both single-family building

PHOENIX

Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ, MSA

SALES ESTIMATES (\$ Millions)

Electrical Sales Estimate 2Q 2023: \$2,513.1 million
 QTQ % Change: +6.8% / YOY % Change: +3.8%
 Electrical Contractor \$ Potential Estimate: \$1,614.6 million
 Industrial \$ Potential Estimate: \$395.8 million

BUILDING PERMITS

Single-Family: 13,302 (YOY -32.9% / -6,519 units)
 Multi-Family: 10,432 (YOY +8% / +774 units)

POPULATION GROWTH

Population Estimate 2022: 5,015,678
 Net Migration: 72,841 / New Residents per Day: 199.6
 2017-2022 # Change: 254,961 / 2017-2022 % Change: +5.4%

permits and multi-family permits, with 13,302 and 10,432 permits, respectively.

Along with several Intel chip plants and the Lucent EV factory being built, some of the larger projects in the works include the \$1-billion Optima McDowell Mountain Village in North Scottsdale; the \$400-million Prime Data Center in Avondale; the \$450-million Desert Diamond Casino in Glendale; and Longroad Energy's utility-scale solar power and storage project in Maricopa County.

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Growing Your Business ORGANICALLY

While many distributors use M&As to fuel growth, the tried-and-true strategy of organic growth can pay more consistent dividends.

For every distributor, there's a tale of growth. For decades, it's centered on a much-used strategy: acquisition. However, acquisition is no underdog's tool. It's a game where the big players, the ones with deep pockets, have the upper hand, equipped to seal deals, re-vamp operations and await the eventual returns. Private equity groups, too, find themselves embroiled in this high-stakes game of acquisition.

Yet, as it stands, the hot market of mergers and acquisitions in the post-pandemic era is not constant. As sure as the tide, it will ebb. And when it does the distributors who have staked everything on acquisition might find the rug pulled out from under them. An acquisition spree introduces new layers to your business, from products to processes, from markets to technologies. And each layer you add, says distribution consultant Scott Benfield, makes the dance of growth that much more intricate.

Depend solely on acquisition and you risk neglecting the fertile ground of organic growth. Unlike acquisitions, these channels can scale both ways, making them far more adaptable. When the well of acquisition opportunities runs dry, all you're left with is the knowledge of how to grow through acquisition. That's a precarious cliff to hang onto.

The distributors that emerge victorious will be the ones well-versed in the dual arts of growth. Mastering organic growth is as essential as air for long-term success. To trigger large-scale growth



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across your diverse business acquisitions, you need a process that connects every rung of your organization, from the sales rep right up to leadership. Without such rigor, your company's organic growth may slow down and eventually stop.

7 WAYS TO DRIVE ORGANIC GROWTH IN YOUR DISTRIBUTION BUSINESS

Organic growth isn't a single-threaded strategy. Success requires a diversified approach to building sales. How can you identify the right path to take to achieve your goals? Here are seven effective growth strategies electrical distributors should consider:

#1. Grow wallet share. To grow wallet share, your sales reps must have considerable knowledge of your product lines and the needs of your existing cus-

tomers. Most B2B buyers purchase from multiple suppliers. Sometimes, that's because your competitors offer better prices and quantities that are more convenient. Other times it's because they don't know you carry certain products, so they keep buying them from your competitor.

Your sales reps should feel empowered to probe and explore, knowing they're helping the customer. It's much more convenient for a customer to get everything they need from a single supplier.

When you grow wallet share, the goal is to win as much business from your customer and sell them everything they need across as many categories as they require. The goal isn't to outsell your competitor. It's to determine what customer needs are and sell the products from your catalog that fill those needs. To never miss out on a sale, you want to

By Benj Cohen

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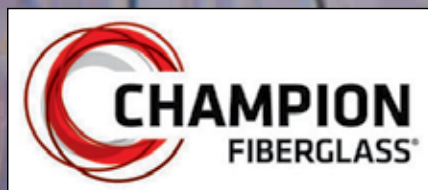
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identify and fill wallet share gaps. Distributors winning at this organic growth strategy are arming their reps with the tools they need to see what customers might be buying from competitors so they can easily spot gaps in wallet share. The best reps say, “Hey, customers who buy sanding products from us typically buy wire brushes, too. Where do you source yours?”

#2. Optimize product mix. One distributor shared that a quarter of their revenue comes from rebates. Ultimately, these efforts can improve profitability with existing customers. However, to optimize product mix to take advantage of rebates, you must have a clear view of what the customer is buying and match it against rebates that unlock better profit margins. Distributors that optimize their offerings are acutely aware of product lines, market data and shifting rebate programs.

#3. Expand customer base. Expanding a customer base means proactively acquiring more customers. The best way to do this is to get really good at prospecting. Many distributors try to prospect, but only a few get it right. The best distributors have a sales management tool that allows them to target prospects and track leads so they can nurture them until they become customers.

#4. Increase average order value. At its most basic, this strategy is a low-lift opportunity to get more customers to buy more on each order. Distributors that get this right show customers personalized recommendations when they browse online. They arm their reps with upsell recommendations when they’re on the phone or in the field — the easiest way to increase average order value (AOV).

#5. Offer add-on services. Distribution companies can differentiate themselves by introducing value-added services that enhance the customer experience. For example, technical support, training, warranties, maintenance, customization or consulting can improve customer loyalty while generating additional revenue.

#6. Upsell existing customers. Customer service doesn’t have to be

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Benj Cohen grew up in his family’s distribution business, Benco Dental, a dental supply business started by his great-grandfather in the 1930s. He blended this background with a Harvard degree in applied math to found [proton.ai](http://www.proton.ai) (www.proton.ai), a company dedicated to bringing artificial intelligence to distribution companies and others in the B2B world to deliver large ROI. Cohen was the subject of a 2019 *Electrical Wholesaling* feature on AI, “The Art & Science of Artificial Intelligence.” You can contact him at benjamin.cohen@proton.ai.



a cost center. Customer service representatives (CSRs) should routinely offer higher-tier products or services to current customers to drive greater margins. However, to do this well, CSRs need the right tools to figure out their customers’ needs on the fly. Distributors that do this well, like MSC Industrial Supply Co., arm CSRs with AI-powered insights to make recommendations in real time. For every \$1 they spend on AI recommendations, MSC’s CSR team generates \$3.50 in profit.

#7. Expand product offerings. Distributors can introduce new products that appeal to different customer segments. This approach helps attract new customers and diversifies the product base. To do this well, distributors should engage in ongoing training and development for sales teams to deepen their product knowledge and familiarity with an ever-changing roster of products. The goal should be the “endless aisle” that makes it easy for customers to get everything they need in one shop — including long-tail items.

All these approaches require considerable investment in enhancing your team’s product and customer knowledge. Well-informed and knowledgeable sales and customer service teams are critical to organic growth. In the past, the effort to drive accountability and product knowledge was labor-intensive and manual. Today, technology can provide

the insights and measurability you need to drive organic growth.

DRIVE ORGANIC GROWTH WITH BETTER PROCESSES

Organic growth strategies require vigorous human accountability and smooth workflows for communicating information and tracking sales activities. How do you track customer buying data across multiple sales channels, ever-changing product lines and even the ups and downs of inventory?

There is no DIY manual approach that can effectively drive organic growth. There is simply no way to maintain the rigor of consistent processes across a distribution business. If you want to move the needle and scale these strategies, you need technology designed to support organic growth in distribution sales. While best practices in human processes fuel organic growth, the technology provides the rigor and that single consistent thread to systematize behaviors that add bottom line revenues.

Sales management software gives CSRs and direct sales reps everything they need to become trusted consultants to their customers. The most robust tools offer the following:

- A recommendation engine that takes backend customer purchase and preference data to suggest upsells and value-adds.

- Integration of products across all sales channels for increased sales diversity.

■ Actionable insight on sales activities for managers to improve their coaching efforts.

■ A user-friendly format that gives even the most inexperienced CSR or sales rep help with what and how to sell.

■ Suggestions for categories customers are underspending in, or bundles to increase closed revenues per sale.

■ A single screen where a sales rep can access product data or promotions in the hands of your sales team so they can quickly emphasize the right items to the right customers.

■ Integration with all sales channels and customer data across your entire organization.

A robust sales management tool integrated with all your systems can establish and maintain rigor around your organic growth strategies from sales reps to leadership. The right tech tools change behaviors in consistent ways to drive market share.

This software applies intelligent best practices that increase sales volume by

making it easier to sell more. Instead of giving your sales rep a spreadsheet with data, an AI-enabled sales management engine steers them toward the right products and pitches to maximize your organic growth strategy.

Managers can quickly see how individual reps are doing and whether projected sales goals are attainable. They can use this insight to coach sales reps to be more effective before a sales goal is missed.

THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR ORGANIC GROWTH

Many distributors fail to leverage the endless possibilities of organic growth models. They may acquire competitors for a time, but the businesses they've acquired aren't connected. While this can work for a while, this strategy loses its punch if your business stops growing from within.

If you want to keep growing your business without relying on factors out of your control (like acquisition op-

portunities drying up), it's vital to have a strong, step-by-step plan that connects every level of the business.

Sales rep level. Your sales team needs a simple system. They should know who they are selling to and what they are selling. This makes their job easier and helps the business grow.

Manager level. Managers need a way to watch over the sales reps and their work. This keeps everyone focused on growth.

Leadership level. Leaders need a way to see how managers are doing. Are they keeping the team on track and moving the business toward its goals?

Most distributors will benefit by improving their organic growth efforts even if acquisitions remain a central growth strategy. As we've learned over the last few years, the next disruption is just around the corner. Don't miss out on organic growth strategies or waste time manually trying to move the organic growth needle. **EW**

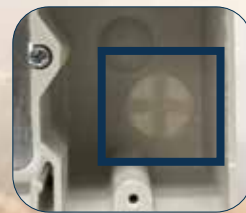
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E-Biz Show Report

At IDEA's 2023 E-Biz Conference, the electrical industry continued on its search for a single source of truth in digital electrical product data.



Josh Bone, executive director for ELECTRI International, the research arm of the National Electrical Contractors association (NECA), said the billions of dollars in industrial construction is forcing contractors to be more productive than ever on the job-site. He believes pre-assembled products and system may be a solution.

IDEA's 2023 Conference in Nashville, TN, from Sept. 18-20 offered attendees a look at both the association's journey over the past 25 years and a glimpse of some of the new services it will be offering in the future

Mike Wentz, IDEA's VP of sales and marketing, and a veteran of the ERP industry and a survivor of the dot-com era, has shepherded dozens if not hundreds of distributors and manufacturers through the ever-evolving world of distribution software, online storefronts and digital product data during his 40-plus years in the electrical wholesaling industry. He kicked off the meeting with a fascinating retrospective of the market's journey with product data, from the reams of Trade Service catalogs that used to line the counters of distributor branches, through the exciting but often frustrating days of the dot-com revolution and onto to the modern era and the development of the IDW and now the IDEA Connector.

By Jim Lucy, Editor-in-Chief

In today's world of digital electrical product data, electrical distributors and electrical manufacturers continue to work together with the IDEA team to develop clean data that can act as "single source of truth" for not only wholesalers, manufacturers and independent reps, but quite possibly eventually end users as well.

David Oldfather, IDEA's president and CEO, updated members on his team's efforts to bring on new service providers who can continue this quest, and to help the association offer a new and enhanced suite of services. He said IDEA's Technical Advisory Council (TAC) wants the association to focus on several core goals:

- Become more predictive in nature by predicting missing data and/or market basket data
- Leverage AI and machine learning to help IDEA offer services beyond what's now available
- Position the TAC to remain/be open to reviewing all new data management opportunities, such as best-in-class or state-of-the-art services, startups and innovative offerings.

Current members of the Technical Advisory Council are: Aravind Padmanabhan, executive VP & CTO, nVent; Kerry Young, president & CEO, Bluemeteor; Josh Bone executive director, ELECTRI International; Satya Sanivarapu, NAED's technology director - Digital Supply Chain; Phil Hale, CIO, Elliott Electric Supply; and Michael Delagado, president & CEO, Canals.ai.

IDEA and its TAC have put a renewed focus on working with all key partners in the electrical industry's supply chain, including the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) and the National Electrical Manufacturers Representatives Association (NEMRA), and the meeting was notable for the discussions on how distributors and manufacturers can work more closely with the contractor community to service their electrical product data needs.

Josh Bone, who has worked closely with NECA through ELECTRI International for many years and has a seat on IDEA's TAC, provided some solid insight into the challenges that electrical contractors now have with job-site productivity, hiring new electricians to keep pace with the wave of retiring Baby Boomers and the need to embrace pre-assembled products and system.

The overall tone of the meeting was buoyant, and although final attendance figures weren't available at press-time, one IDEA staffer said attendance was roughly the same as the 2022 IDEA E-Biz Conference, which attracted more than 200 attendees and set an attendance record. **EW**

THIS MONTH'S PRODUCT PICKS

Timer Switches

Leviton's new line of Decora Countdown Timer Switches consists of eleven models in total, including 15A models featuring the company's new Green Flex Sleeve for easy wiring to ground or neutral wires, and 20A models that can be used in single pole, multi-way or multi-timer applications and support higher load ratings. The new 15A models feature Leviton's Green Flex Sleeve Wire, which provides the option to connect to ground in homes without a neutral wire; or remove the green sleeve and connect to the neutral wire, if available.

Leviton | www.leviton.com



Adjustable Outlet Box

Allied Moulded Products recently introduced a new electrical box to its SLIDERBOX family of products. The 1099-AB Adjustable Fiberglass Outlet Box is UL-listed and has a two-hour wall fire rating, making it a safe and reliable choice for electrical installations. The 1099-AB is promoted as the only adjustable outlet box in the industry made from fiberglass and has two inches of travel, which accommodates a variety of wall finishes.

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(1) Outside County Paid/Requested Mail Subscriptions stated on PS Form 3541. (Include direct written request from recipient, telemarketing and Internet requests from recipient, paid subscriptions including nominal rate subscriptions, employer requests, advertiser's proof copies, and exchange copies.)	11,864	10,076
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(4) Requested Copies Distributed by Other Mail Classes Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail®)	0	0
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(2) In-County Nonrequested Copies Stated on PS Form 3541 (include Sample copies, Requests Over 3 years old, Requests induced by a Premium, Bulk Sales and Requests including Association Requests, Names obtained from Business Directories, Lists, and other sources)	0	0
(3) Nonrequested Copies Distributed Through the USPS by Other Classes of Mail (e.g. First-Class Mail, Nonrequestor Copies mailed in excess of 10% Limit mailed at Standard Mail® or Package Services Rates)	217	231
(4) Nonrequested Copies Distributed Outside the Mail (Include Pickup Stands, Trade Shows, Showrooms and Other Sources)	37	8
e. Total Nonrequested Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), and (4))	2,365	3,984
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a. Requested and Paid Electronic Copies	6,093	6,006
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PS Form 3526-R, July 2014

Champion Fiberglass (Houston): **Christopher Kissel** has joined the company as CEO. He has experience in the oil and gas and natural resources sectors and as a field engineer with ExxonMobil, and as an investment banker with Goldman Sachs. Kissel received his MBA from Harvard Business School and his engineering degree from McGill University.



Kissel

Goran Haag, current president and founder, will serve as executive chairman and concentrate on special projects. He will maintain ownership of Champion Fiberglass.

Arlington Industries (Scranton, PA): **Jim Cortese** was promoted to national sales manager. He will serve as Arlington's liaison with national buying groups and accounts and will manage Arlington's regional sales management team. Cortese has worked for Arlington since July, 1979 and was most recently the company's Customer Service manager. He replaces long-time national sales manager, **Don Ambrose**, who will now serve as Arlington's director of sales and marketing. In other Arlington news, **Betty Stark**, wife of the late Tom Stark, president of Arlington, is now chairman of the board and **Ray Barnes**, Arlington's CFO, was named VP and treasurer.



Cortese

In other company news, **Richard Temblador** joined Arlington as VP of Product and Business Development. He was previously with Rosendin Electric, one of the nation's largest electrical contractors, and Southwire



Stark

Schneider Electric (Boston): **Antonio Di Vaira** was appointed senior VP of the company's Power Products division for the North American hub (NAM). In his new role, Di Vaira will lead strategic initiatives that reinforce Schneider Electric's commitment to energy innovation. He has more than 20 years of electrical industry experience, including key management posts with ABB in R&D, product management, M&As and supply chain management.

Republic (Davenport, IA): **Todd Wade** will be CEO, effective Oct. 2. Wade has been with Republic since 2012 and has served as the president of the Mechanical Division since Feb. 2022. **Mark Kilmer**, Republic's current CEO, will turn 65 in December and serve as a member of the board of directors. He remains a substantial owner of Republic.



Wade

Wade joined Republic as chief information officer and later took the lead over marketing and dealer success programs.

In other news at Republic, **Robert Smith** and **Jim Probst** have been elected to the company's board. Smith was most recently president and CEO of IMARK Electrical and coordinated efforts of IMARK Group verticals in the electrical, HVAC/r and plumbing space. Probst is president of Quality Home Maintenance (QHM), George Brazil Services and Patrick Riley Services in Phoenix.

OBITUARY

Frederick Blazer, Jr., founder of Colorado's Blazer Electric Supply, passed away peacefully at home in Cincinnati on July 29 with his family at his side. A graduate of Purdue University, Blazer's first job in the distribution industry was with a small distributor, The Judd Co. in Austin, MN, in 1954. After relocating to Colorado in 1984, Blazer and his two sons, Steve and Mike, started Blazer Electric Supply. He retired in 1995.

Fred was preceded in death by his parents, Frederick and Mary Blazer, and wife Suzanne. Survivors include sister Janet; his children Michael (Rae Ann); Julia (Barry); F. Steven (Carolyn); and Gregory (Galen). He also had six grandchildren: Trevor Blazer (Alea); Casey Rowley (Josh); Courtney Blazer; Hannah Elku; Madeline Berman (Noah); Grace Bianconi (Patrick); and eight great-grandchildren.

Eliseu (Lee) Vieira, a widely respected outside salesperson with Swift Electrical Supply, passed away on Aug. 27 from pancreatic cancer. He had been with Swift Electrical Supply for the past seven years. Known for his hard work ethic, Lee was calling on Swift Electrical Supply's customers up until two days before his passing.

Morris Products, Inc. (Queensbury, NY): **Kyle Vespa** was appointed Western regional sales manager. Vespa will be responsible for sales growth in the Rocky Mountains and Pacific Coast areas.



Vespa

Leviton (Melville, NY): **Brian Sorensen** was promoted to VP of U.S. Sales, Network Solutions and will assume the role from Brad Leland who will retire on January 2, 2024. Since beginning his career as a national account manager at Leviton in 2006, he supported global relationships across diverse geographies.

Legrand (West Hartford, CT): **Jane White** was appointed chief diversity & engagement officer for Legrand, North and Central America (LNCA). In this newly formed role on the LNCA CEO executive staff, White will lead efforts to foster a culture and environment that attracts, retains and develops a diversely talented and highly engaged workforce.



White

Gerrie Electric Wholesale Ltd. (Burlington, Ontario): **Scott Currier** was appointed CFO, according to a LinkedIn post. He has 20 years of experience in finance and operations.

Omni Cable (OmniCable) (West Chester, PA): **Tom Schneider** was hired as national account manager and will focus on growing the company's strategic accounts nationwide. He has more than 12 years of industry experience. Prior to OmniCable, Schneider held various positions at Cerrowire, Prysmian and 3M Electrical.



Schneider

City Electric Supply (CES) (Dallas): After 15 years of leadership as CEO, **Thomas Hartland-Mackie** will now serve as the executive chairman of City Electric Supply and City Electrical Factors (CEF), the company's U.K. sector. Hartland-Mackie will remain as the chief executive officer of Labora Group, the family holding company. Co-

COOs **Andrew Dawes** and **John Gray** will take over as co-CEOs. Hartland-Mackie joined the business in 2006 as a trainee under his grandfather, Tom Mackie. At the age of 20, he took over for his grandfather as CEO of City Electric Supply, and in 2011 as chairman of the board for City Electrical Factors.

Gray joined the company in 1986 as a driver. He went from delivering supplies and organizing the warehouse to selling door-to-door and becoming a branch manager at CEF Harrow in northwest London. At just 24 years old, he moved to the U.S. to support the expansion of the company in the Carolinas.

In 1992, Andrew Dawes kicked off his career as a driver, moved to inside sales and then to branch manager. He became the VP of operations for the Canadian business in 2012. Dawes moved to the U.S. in 2017 when he was appointed Co-COO alongside John Gray while continuing to oversee the Canadian business and helping lead the growth of newer operations like CES Online and National Solutions.

Hartland-Mackie also stepped down as global chief executive officer over CES and CEF and has promoted **Jeremy Saunders**, who has most recently served as Co-CEO of CEF, to the position.

REP NEWS

Electri-Flex Roselle, IL, appointed **RD Wright Inc.** as their new rep in upstate New York. RD Wright has served this territory for 40 years and is a third-generation rep. The company also appointed **Synergy Electrical Sales** as its new stocking representative in eastern Pennsylvania, southern New Jersey and northern Delaware. Headquartered in Fairless Hills, PA, Synergy focuses on delivering a comprehensive product and services to residential, commercial and industrial clients.

Bell & McCoy Lighting and Controls now represents Current in the Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, western Tennessee and the Alabama-Florida-Mississippi Panhandle markets for the HLI Brands and GLI Roadway portfolios excluded from Alabama-Florida. This partnership expands upon Bell & McCoy's existing representation of Current's GLI Brands portfolio in Texas and Oklahoma.

Morris Products recently appointed new representation. **Amos and Connors Sales Inc.** will represent Morris in Colorado and Wyoming. The company also welcomed two new members to its rep network through mergers and acquisitions. **JS Electric**, with Jeff Silver as principal, will take over the Florida peninsula, replacing Guy Jones and Electrical Logistics.

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