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Montreal distributors merge

By Hugh McBride
Editor

Empire Electric Supply Co. Ltd. and Franklin Playford Inc. announced last month that they have merged.

The two Montreal-based electrical distributors, each with four branches and distinctly different customer bases, have joined forces to create Franklin Empire Inc.

"By getting together we are really a stronger force going forward," said Bernie Backman, a vice president of the new company and formerly president of Empire Electric. He cited economies of scale — including lower inventory management and administration costs — as one of the main reasons for their coming

together.

Also justifying the merger, he said, is Franklin Empire's ability to offer a greater selection of products to its customers. The two original companies served separate customer groups: Franklin Playford, the industrial sector; Empire Electric, electrical contractors. Backman points out, however, that these groups are sometimes less than distinct. The new company, he said, can serve the contractor who needs industrial electrical product and vice versa.

"Certainly in the existing branch network there will be an expansion of the range of products that are already there," Backman commented.

Bernie and Cliff Backman, owners of Empire Electric, and Bob and Michael Shapiro, owners of Franklin Playford, are co-owners of the new company. Empire Electric and Franklin Playford have worked together since 1983 when they together bought Revere Electric, based in Mis-

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sissauga, Ontario. That company has two branches in the Greater Toronto area.

Empire Electric, started in 1942, has branches in Montreal and the surrounding area. Franklin Playford, which opened for business in 1946 as Franklin Electric, has branches in Ottawa, Toronto and in Chicoutimi and Trois Rivieres, Quebec.

Bob Shapiro will serve as president of the newly-formed Franklin Empire. Michael Shapiro and the two Backman brothers will be vice-presidents. □