

History

Westburne

Westburne's story began in 1926 when a gas boom in Turner Valley, Alberta prompted a group of Calgary businessmen to form a small exploration company. This company, Ainsworth Oils Limited, later became Commonwealth Petroleum Ltd., which John Scrymgeour and his partner Bill Atkinson acquired in 1959. Mr. Scrymgeour was Chairman of the Board of Westburne International

Industries Ltd. and he later combined Commonwealth and General Petroleums of Canada, two of the oldest contract drilling firms in Canada, to launch the Westburne group of drilling companies. Westburne made its first, tentative venture into the Canadian wholesale distribution in late 1963, through the acquisition of a major plumbing and heating wholesaler in the Quebec City area. With the future in mind, Westburne Oil Company Limited changed its name subsequently to United Westburne Industries Limited. Additional acquisitions developed United Westburne into one of the major companies of its kind in the world. In 1971, United Westburne entered the Canadian electrical supply industry, and continued to expand through various acquisitions over the years. Indeed, 1979 was a pivotal year for United Westburne in the electrical supply industry when it completed the acquisition of Nedco and Zentronics from Northern Telecom. These acquisitions established United Westburne as a major nationwide distributor of electrical, electronics and telecommunications products to the commercial and industrial market sectors. Commencing in 1986, Westburne added refrigeration, air conditioning and ventilation supplies to its product line through a series of acquisitions of Canadian companies involved in these areas in Canada and the United States:

In 1995, United Westburne changed its name to Westburne Inc. and continued to expand in Canada and the United States by completing various acquisitions that added 81 branches to its existing network. In forty years, Westburne has become the largest North American wholesaler and integrated distributor of construction, industrial and commercial supplies. Its 5500 employees - a third of whom were in sales - served over 150,000 customers from a network of 521 branches. As of January 1, 2000 Westburne generated sales of about \$2,500,000,000, 45.6% of Westburne's revenues came from the sale of plumbing, heating, 49.4% from electrical equipment, 3.3% from refrigeration & HVAC and 1.7% from industrial products.

Acquisition of Westburne by Rexel SA

On September 25, 2000 Rexel SA, a world leader in the distribution of electrical supplies with a presence on 4 continents and in more than 30 countries entered the Canadian market by completing the acquisition of all the shares of Westburne Inc. Rexel SA based in Paris, France was a subsidiary of the Pinault-Printemps-Redoute Group and listed on the Paris Bourse.

Effective July 1, 2001 the "non-electrical" products businesses were sold to Wolseley Investments, Inc. permitting continued focus on the development of the core business of distribution of electrical products in Canada and all U.S. electrical distribution companies and assets of Westburne were transferred to Rexel, Inc. the U.S. subsidiary of Rexel S.A. On December 12, 2001, the Canadian operating subsidiary changed its name from Westburne Industrial Enterprises (WIEL) Ltd. to Rexel Canada Electrical Inc.

Acquisitions

- *1926 : Birth of Westburne*
- *1979 : Acquisition of Nedco*
- *September 25, 2000 : Acquisition by Rexel S.A. completed*