



BORDER STATES

Powered by Employee-owners





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Leading electrical distributor, Border States, has grown significantly since its founding in 1952.

Corporate Communication Director, Tom Nelson, and Strategic Contractor and Business Development Director, Dave Buddle, reflect on the company's rich history, the future of employee ownership, and their focus on people, growth, excellence and doing good.

Founded in 1952, Border States began as a small enterprise during rural electrification in the Midwestern US.

"We were started by two individuals, spurred by a regional demand for rural electrification – they were focused on solving problems, building lasting relationships," opens Tom Nelson, Corporate Communication Director.

"We have an incredibly exciting history, and with over 70 years in the distribution industry, one thing has never changed – our unrelenting commitment to serve our customers."

In 1984, the company transitioned into an employee-owned structure with the establishment of an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP), and by 2000, it became 100 percent employee-owned.

Over the years, the company's growth has been fueled by building a solid reputation, acquisitions and new branch openings, with Border States now fielding 131 locations across 31 US states.

"We have three core markets: construction, industrial, and utility," Nelson explains.

Enabled by its industry breadth and expertise, Border States today enjoys an extensive coast-to-

coast reach across the US, from Maryland to Washington state, and from North Dakota to Texas.

Strategic Contractor and Business Development Director, Dave Buddle, emphasizes the company's strategic vision, which includes both organic growth and acquisitions alongside a continued focus on metropolitan markets.

"Today, we're the sixth largest electrical distributor in the US, and our next goal is to be the fourth largest by 2030," Buddle affirms.

"While we maintain our roots, more and more of our projects are happening in rural areas on a much larger scale," he adds.

AN EVOLVING INDUSTRY

As the US distribution industry continues to make strides, Buddle notes its rapid evolution and the importance of remaining ahead of the curve.

"In the early years, a distribution company would simply buy products, put them on a shelf, and ship them out. Now, it's all about another level of service and how we differentiate ourselves," explains Buddle.

As such, Border States is by no means a company that merely fulfills orders. Instead, it provides tailored, consultative services across its three core markets,

Border States' footprint, including supported metropolitan markets, as of November 2024.

ensuring each customer receives a unique solution.

"What stands out about us is the level of service we provide," he elaborates.

"We don't just work with the purchasing teams, but up and down the entire customer organization, offering a more personal, collaborative approach."

In this way, the company's strength lies in its flexibility, having become known for quickly adapting to satisfy customers' needs.

"We've even had competitors commend us on our ability to open new locations rapidly to meet demand," Buddle reveals.

STANDING OUT FROM THE CROWD

Reflecting on insights from a recent brand review, Nelson shares Border States' customers', vendors', and employee owners' perspectives on what sets it apart.

"They told us it's our accountability, expertise, flexibility, how we build relationships and our transparency. Whether it is the first hour of the job or the eleventh, we'll be there and if something isn't right, we make it right," he states.

He also points out the deep



beneficial behaviors and attitudes towards employee ownership across the organization.

Meanwhile, a robust leadership framework supplemented by 70 years of industry success continues to add value to the company as a whole.

“We’ve had decades of building stock value for our employee-owners, and that comes through a combination of solid leadership and detailed, strategic plans,” Buddle points out.

FORGING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

The company’s strong relationship with Rosendin is a prime example of its service-first approach.

“Whilst Rosendin is a company that’s big in renewable energy, it also works in industrial sectors such as semiconductor manufacturing,” informs Buddle.

“We’ve grown with Rosendin in markets across Arizona and the Northwest, opening new branches to meet their needs. In Rosendin’s case, our service model has been what has set-us apart, allowing us to integrate seamlessly.”

As such, Border State’s work

relationships Border States has nurtured with its clients, customers, and employees over time.

“These aren’t just business relationships – they’re more akin to friendships, cultivated over years.”

Meanwhile, Buddle discusses the company’s agility, and how it approaches each project uniquely, focusing on what its customers need to succeed.

“Whether it’s a new warehouse, a branch, or some other creative solution, we’ll find a way to get it done. We’re always thinking outside the box,” he confirms.

A CULTURE OF EMPLOYEE OWNERSHIP

At Border States, employee ownership is central to the company’s ethos.

“Being an ESOP means that everyone is accountable. For the ESOP to work, we must all pull together,” Nelson explains.

Alongside collective accountability, a governance structure is in place to ensure the ESOP framework is maintained and run correctly through external valuations, whilst the company’s Ownership Essentials cultivate

Giving back

As a 100 percent employee-owned company, community is what has driven Border States’ success for decades. As such, it values the lives and well-being of those around it, serving communities through fundraisers, cleanup projects, mentoring programs, and community service efforts.

In taking care of the communities in which it lives and works, Border States demonstrates its readiness to give back and make an impact.

with Rosendin on a recent major project was carried out in a highly collaborative manner.

“After successfully completing the first phase, we approached the second phase with full transparency, even offering an



A Border States warehouse in the 1960s



Border States is dedicated to giving back to the communities where they work and live by offering every employee-owner 16 hours of paid volunteer time per fiscal year.

open-book pricing model. “This level of trust is rare in our industry, and it’s what keeps our partnerships strong,” he divulges.

FUTURE GOALS AND GROWTH STRATEGIES

Looking ahead, Nelson goes on to explain how a recent shift in the company’s operational model will further support growth and their pursuit of excellence. “We’ve realigned the company to where we provide value, the

fulfilment and sales functions, allowing each to focus on its strengths. This change ensures we operate consistently across all locations and improves overall efficiency,” he outlines. A major objective of this realignment is cultivating teamwork to drive collaboration across the company. “We’re witnessing a renewed sense of teamwork, and all of this puts us in a unique position in the industry – almost a national footprint with a small company attention to detail at the local level. Our goal is to drive standardization and efficiency while allowing local customization in the last mile of delivery.”

COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

At its core, Border States remains dedicated to ensuring that every employee-owner has the tools, resources and training to enable them to grow and excel both

Border States’ Services team works to deliver streamlined execution for material management, workforce augmentation, and manufacturing and assembly.



Supplier diversity

Border States is proud to support 1,521 diverse and small suppliers, including:

- 109 minority-owned suppliers
- 257 woman-owned suppliers
- 1,404 small businesses
- 86 veteran-owned suppliers

As a non-diverse prime contractor, the company is ready to help others achieve their supplier diversity goals.

It also mentors diverse suppliers to help them meet requirements and further grow their business. As such, the company is a proud member of:

- Women’s Business Development Center (WBDC)
- Mountain Plains Minority Supplier Development Council (MPMSDC)
- North Central Minority Supplier Development Council (NCMSDC)

personally and professionally. “In doing this, we maintain our strong foundation and ensure the rewards of ownership,” Nelson states and shifts the conversation back to culture. “All the rewards of ownership don’t mean much if you cannot enjoy them. Our safety goal is zero injuries. Every employee-owner should go home healthy and uninjured each day. Anything less is unacceptable, and we are pursuing excellence in this area just as we are in everything we do.”

24-Hour Help Line: 1-800-800-0199
 support@borderstates.com
 solutions.borderstates.com



For the Unstoppable

You shouldn't go it alone.

When your work can't stop, you need more than just a supplier; you need a trusted advisor who empowers you and delivers on your business objectives.

Who we are

At Border States, we are dedicated to supplying products and services to the construction, industrial and utility industries.

Our company is rated the sixth largest electrical distributor in the United States by Electrical Wholesaling magazine. We are 100% employee-owned with more than 3,500 employees and 130 branches in 31 states, and our Branch Support Center (corporate office) is located in Fargo, North Dakota.

Our services span from wire and cable support to project management to engineering services, and the list continues to expand. These innovative offerings set us apart from the competition and ensure your work continues moving forward — no matter how unique your needs are.

Learn more

[Visit our website](#) to learn how Border States can become your competitive advantage.

borderstates.com



Satisfying CUSTOMERS
IS OUR MOST
Important Job



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