

Persevering and Prevailing

With more than 100 years of experience, Imperial Electric combines new products and engineering experience to find the best solutions for its clients.

by Lindsay Fletcher

Imperial Electric, part of Nidec Elevator, of Nidec Corp., is one of the world's largest suppliers of elevator motors and machine supplies, producing approximately 50,000 motors and machines per year for OEMs and independent elevator contractors. Its products include a full line of gearless and geared traction machines, AC and DC elevator motors, hydraulic submersible and dry (under the tank) motors, custom and universal machine bases, car slings and platforms.

Its products and services are complemented by engineering capabilities and assurances in security and the wellbeing of customers, said Gary Ward, vice president of Sales and Marketing for Imperial. He believes this engineering and field experience, allowing team members to recommend and then provide the best solution for each installation, is what sets Imperial apart from others in the space.

History

Imperial was founded in Akron, Ohio, in 1889 by a group of investors, related to Henry Ford and Thomas Edison, who were manufacturing electro-dynamic devices. In 1910, Imperial created the Elevator Division as a dedicated entity. Imperial was part of Kinetek Co., a Jordan Company that had nine companies in the U.S., Italy, Mexico and China. Nidec Corp., from Japan, purchased Kinetek in 2012 to become more involved in the elevator industry. With 240 companies in 45 countries worldwide, Nidec's more than 140,000 employees work to help their counterparts achieve the business' strategic initiatives.

With more than 100 years' experience in the space, the company's biggest accomplishment has been changing with the times and finding new solutions that make field

installations faster while lowering their clients' costs, Ward said. This includes going from direct current (DC) motors and motor generator sets to alternating current (AC) motors and from DC to ACPM gearless machines. These products also consume up to 40% less power than traditional motors and are noticeably quieter and nearly maintenance-free.

Many of Imperial's products are installed in iconic structures around the world, including airports and public and industrial buildings. In the U.S., Imperial motors can be found in the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge in NYC, Supreme Court of the United States, Statue of Liberty, Yale University, Princeton University, 11 Wall Street, Carlsbad Caverns, Porsche Tower, Massachusetts General Hospital, Grand Central Station and more.

Imperial was awarded The Ellies award presented by Elevator World, Inc. for Best Supplier of Motors in 2019 and 2020.

Working Through a Pandemic

Imperial moved from Akron to North Canton, Ohio, in June 2020. The company had been planning the move for a while and took advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic to make the move a reality. Imperial's new office has space for 50 employees and is attached to the factory for Canton Elevator, a sister company within the Nidec Corp. The modernized Imperial factory is located in Middleport, Ohio.

On March 23, 2020, Nidec Imperial Electric was deemed an essential business, and work resumed, but not in the ordinary way. Certain Imperial teams were sent to work from home, while others continued to work in the office. Ward said:



Imperial moved its office from Akron, Ohio, to North Canton, Ohio, in 2020.



Imperial has more than 100 years' experience in the elevator motor and machine supply space.

“Through smart management, improved safety precautions and perseverance, Imperial stuck together. 2020 was an unknown and tumultuous time for all individuals and companies, drastically and quickly changing our way of life and business. With great leaders and systems, Imperial’s team persevered and prevailed.”

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Imperial’s sales team traveled frequently, sharing their years of experience and

knowledge with other like-minded individuals in the elevator and motor industry. With COVID-19 safety measures easing, the Imperial sales team traveled to Arizona in April to present at the National Association of Elevator Contractors (NAEC) Educational Conference. Ward and Senior Sales Engineer Dennis Rhodes presented “Overcoming Gearless Machine Challenges: The COVID Edition” at the conference. Ward said, “Attending trade shows and conferences is crucial to Imperial’s team in order to learn and understand the newest and latest in elevator technology.”

Coming out of the pandemic and looking to the future, Ward said he believes Imperial’s business will continue to expand as workers return to offices and hotels become fully occupied. He said Imperial also sees continuing evolution as the way to move forward. Ward said:

“New products are the key to growing your business. Those products must be robust and dependable, but also priced to be affordable. Our team has been a leading provider of geared and gearless machines in North America for 100 years, and we look forward to continuing to be a leader for 100 more.”

Sales Manager Steve Nero agreed, saying Imperial will be adding another machine to its lineup this year, unveiling the product at the National Association of Elevator Contractors Convention and Expo in New Orleans, in October. “The elevator industry is always evolving, so we must evolve with it. We are always looking for better, more affordable ways to serve customer needs,” he said. 🌐