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**Press Release**

*SOURCE: Progress Software Corporation*



## **Progress-Based Apprise Beats Out Microsoft and Provides Half a Million Dollars in Savings for Bell Automotive**

### **Top Distributor of Auto Accessories Changes Its Business Model and Technology to Meet the Demands of Large Retail Customers, Achieving Immediate ROI**

BEDFORD, Mass., Aug. 27 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- The Progress Company, a business unit of Progress Software Corporation (Nasdaq: PRGS - News) and a leading supplier of technology for building business applications, announced today that Bell Automotive Products, Inc., America's premier supplier of automotive accessories, has deployed Progress®-based Apprise® Distribution to meet the demands of their growing business and expanding customer base. With the recent acquisition of Cobb Manufacturing, a leading supplier of auto convenience products, and the creation of new non-automotive business units, Bell decided to streamline operations by outsourcing its manufacturing to Asia. This business model change sent Bell hunting for a distribution application flexible enough to handle the complexities of distinctly different business units, while still meeting the stringent demands of mass merchandizing giants in the retail, office supply and auto parts markets.

Bell was looking for an application that could support product sourcing from Asia, customize easily to meet customer demands, and keep up with the company's impressive growth rate. During the evaluation process they contracted with a consulting company to see what distribution-focused solutions were available in the marketplace. They reviewed 25 applications, including those from SAP, Microsoft and Oracle. Most were dropped due to high IT overhead or expensive customization, requiring either a full time database administrator or additional programming to meet Bell's specific import requirements. Apprise Distribution from Progress application partner Apprise Software, a leading provider of enterprise-wide software for distribution companies, not only provided the best fit from a technology and budget standpoint, it also allowed the company to quickly address the needs of their demanding customer base.

Progress Database and OpenEdge(TM) Platform Provides Competitive Edge

"We selected Apprise because they understood our industry and requirements," said Jim Neitzel, vice president of information technology for Bell. "We were familiar with the Progress database and knew that in addition to being very low maintenance, it would put us in a better position than Microsoft SQL Server. We needed something that had growth potential, without forcing us to change platforms in the near future. The Apprise application had the flexibility and power to meet our needs today and well into tomorrow."

"If we had chosen anyone else, we would not be moving as quickly or have the rich functionality we needed," added Neitzel. "It would have been difficult to integrate, costing us an additional half a million dollars to implement an application from one of the other vendors. Their packages were fine if you do business the way they do business, but the second you want to change anything, you'll have to go outside for help. They didn't lend themselves to the very entrepreneurial nature of our organization."

Based on Progress OpenEdge(TM) technology, Apprise provides tools for distributors to manage product importation, anticipate and respond to changing customer purchasing patterns, support high-volume transaction environments, and provide charge-back support. Apprise takes advantage of the Progress OpenEdge platform's flexibility to provide clients with customized support.

"Bell is unique in that all three divisions ship differently," said Charlie Wendroff, vice president of Apprise. "Because our application is based on the Progress OpenEdge platform, we were able to give

them the functionality to deal with everything from small cubed items to large irregular items shipped every way imaginable, including complex less-than-truckload (LTL) shipments. Bell can now quickly meet the demands of mass merchants who are on the cutting edge of distribution and are very particular. If you don't do things to their exact specifications, they'll take it off the invoice in the form of charge-backs and this can become a big accounts receivable challenge."

In addition to meeting Bell's functionality needs, leveraging the Apprise application has provided Bell with significant overhead and productivity savings. Bell currently has three warehouses with about one million square feet of space to manage. Due to the efficiency and increased management capabilities of the Apprise application, the company is consolidating its three distribution facilities into one 600,000 square foot warehouse.

"Because the OpenEdge platform is very resource-efficient and flexible, developers can quickly meet end-user requirements, which translates to immediate cost savings," said Dave Ireland, president of the Progress Company. "Bell's testimonial about the Apprise application is just further proof that Progress technology simplifies the job of building the world's best business applications."

#### About Bell Automotive Products

Bell Automotive Products, Inc. is one of several companies in the Bell family of consumer products companies. The original Bell company had its roots in automotive with the design and manufacture of one of the very first auto racing helmets in 1954. Over the years, Bell companies expanded into auto racing accessories, motorcycle helmets and accessories and bicycle helmets and accessories.

In February 2000, Bell Automotive acquired Cobbs Manufacturing Company. For over 50 years, Cobbs has been a leading supplier of automotive convenience accessories. A dedicated focus on automotive accessories has yielded an unparalleled reputation for quality, innovation and customer service. Beginning in 2001, our broad line of convenience accessories will be marketed under the well-recognized Bell consumer brand as well as the established and respected Cobbs brand name. Products include: Drink Holders, Clocks/Compasses/Thermometers, License Plate Frames & Fasteners, Steering Wheel Covers, Electrical Accessories, Cell Phone Accessories, Dress-up Accessories, Fun Items, and General Accessories.

Bell Automotive Products has its headquarters in Scottsdale AZ and its distribution center in Des Moines IA. We are committed to continuing to be a leader in product design and innovation and providing outstanding customer service and support.

#### About Apprise Software, Inc.

Apprise Software, Inc. is a leading provider of enterprise-wide software for distribution companies as well as stand-alone financial applications. Founded in 1984, Apprise Software is headquartered in Bridgewater, New Jersey, USA and services customers throughout the world, with the majority of those in North America. Apprise Solutions includes Financial, Distribution, Importing, Mass Merchant Management, EDI, EIS, RF and Warehouse Management modules. For more information please contact Apprise Software, Inc. at (908) 725-6000 or visit [www.apprise.com](http://www.apprise.com).

#### About the Progress Company

The Progress Company is a global supplier of software and services that simplify the development, deployment, integration, and management of business applications. The Progress® OpenEdge(TM) platform, with the industry's leading embedded database, delivers lowest cost-of-ownership applications that are rapidly implemented and easily integrated with other enterprise, extended enterprise and Internet applications.

With the expertise of more than 2,000 independent software vendors (ISVs) and application service providers (ASPs), the Progress Company and its application partners supply more than \$5 billion annually in Progress technology, Progress-based applications, and related services. Progress customers span 50,000 organizations in more than 120 countries including 70 percent of the Fortune 100. The Progress Company, an operating unit of Progress Software Corporation (Nasdaq: PRGS - News), is headquartered in Bedford, Mass., and can be reached at 1-781-280-4000 or on the Web at [www.progress.com](http://www.progress.com).

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