

# Electrical Wholesaling

The Independent Voice of Electrical Distribution®

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The Anixters have one of the mostly widely recognized family names in the world of wire and cable. Here are the Anixters of A-Z Industries (Front-to-back): Bill Anixter, chairman of the board; Jim Anixter, president; Darren Anixter, executive V.P.; Todd Anixter, executive V.P.; Eric Anixter, executive V.P.; and Courtney Anixter, V.P.

## For the Love of the Game

Ever wonder who that guy is with the pink hat at Cubs' games? Meet Jim Anixter of A-Z Industries.

One of the electrical wholesaling industry's most endearing qualities is the impact of family-owned businesses on the electrical market each and every day, despite the dozens of acquisitions by giant global

conglomerates that make headlines every year. For the past 24 years, A-Z Industries, Northbrook, Ill., a 24-year-old family-owned wire-and-cable distributor, has made an indelible impression on the electrical industry with some truly unforgettable personalities. You won't find too many companies with a recently retired 102-year-old employee who still pounds a boxing bag everyday at the local YMCA for exercise, or a Chicago Cubs baseball fan who once dropped off a Cubs pennant at the Vatican for Pope John Paul II, or is seen by millions on WGN-TV broadcasts of Cubs' games. That's just the start of the story at A-Z Industries, where Max Fabian recently retired after working for the Anixter family for more than 50 years. Then there's Jim Anixter, company co-founder and president — and the Chicago Cubs' famous "Pink Hat Guy" with the to-die-for tickets behind home plate at Wrigley Field. They have added some real color to the business of distributing specialty wire and cable through stocking locations in the Chicago area, Houston, Phoenix and Charlotte, N.C. A-Z Industries stocks more than 5,000 different wire and cable varieties and has particular expertise in products for electrical contractors, mines, utilities and low-voltage applications. You could say wire and cable runs in the family for Jim Anixter. He's the son of Alan Anixter, who in 1956 founded what would become the world's largest wire and cable distributor, Anixter International, Glenview, Ill., along with Jim's uncle, William. Jim worked at the family business for 30 years before starting up A-Z Industries in 1988 with Bob Zywicki, another former Anixter employee. When they left Anixter International and founded A-Z Industries, they brought Max Fabian with them. Fabian had worked for the Anixter family since the 1930s, when, while working for the Chicago Police Department as a detective, he met Jules Anixter, who offered him a job as a security guard and chauffeur. At A-Z Industries his responsibilities included watching over the warehouse, making bank deposits and picking up and delivering mail. His retirement late last year was well-documented in several Chicagoland newspapers.

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# A-Z Wire & Cable

A Division of A-Z Industries, Inc.

## A Brief History

Jim Anixter and Robert Zywicki, two long-time former Anixter Bros. Wire & Cable employees, started A-Z Industries, Inc. in Northbrook, IL in March of 1988.

Under the guidance of Jim Anixter and Bob Zywicki, A-Z Industries established a niche in the wire and cable distribution business by following the model created by Jim Anixter's father and uncle, Alan and Bill Anixter respectively, who founded Anixter Bros. in 1956.



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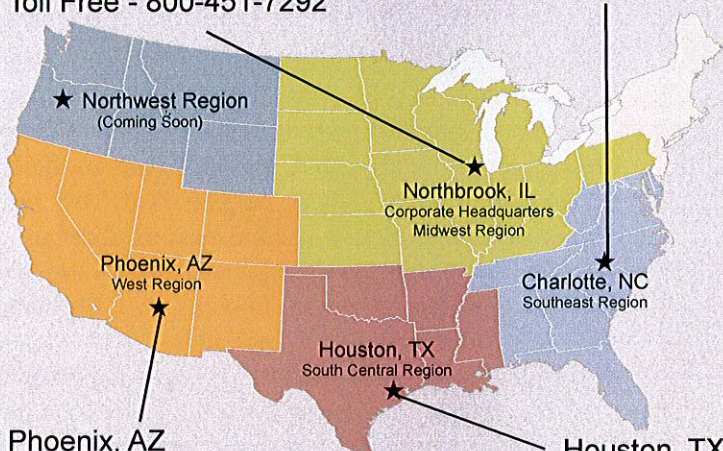
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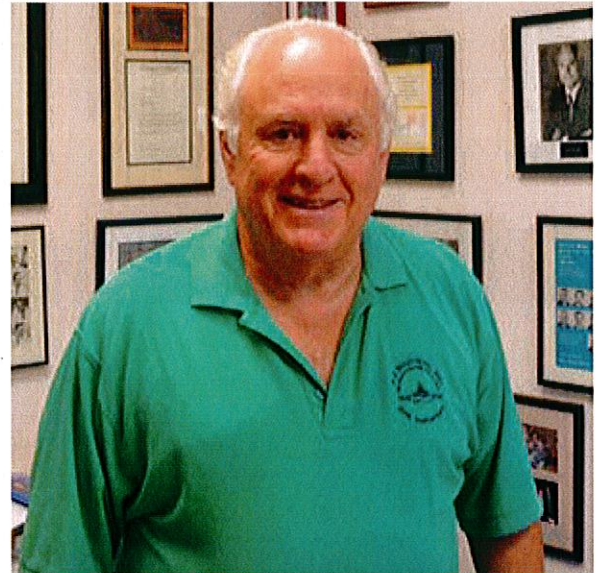
Toll Free - 800-451-7292

A-Z Industries, much like the original Anixter Bros. Wire & Cable concept, has grown from a single location to four major wire and cable distribution centers in Houston, TX, Phoenix, AZ, Charlotte, NC as well as the main distribution and headquarters facility in Chicago (Northbrook, IL).

As it enters its 25th year in business, A-Z Wire & Cable is today a leading master distributor of Electrical, Industrial, Commercial and Electronic Wire and Cable. Our vendors are leaders in the American wire and cable industry. Our inventory includes a complete line of wire and cable standard and specials constructions on manufacturer's bulk reels and industry standard put ups. A-Z provides its customers with a world-class inventory and world-class service and value.

*(This condensed history of A-Z Wire & Cable is reprinted from the 2012 A-Z Wire & Cable Line Card Brochure)*

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During the baseball season, he's known as the "Pink Hat Guy" sitting behind home plate and seen by millions on broadcasts of Cubs' games. But most of the time Jim Anixter is better-known as the president of A-Z Industries.

Jim is an absolute Cubs fanatic in the truest sense of the word. Besides rooting for the Cubs from his front-row seats behind home plate at Wrigley Field with his grandchildren and family, Anixter has on several occasions tried to buy a share of the Cubs; has a private "Hall of Shame" in his basement dedicated to various Cubs' bloopers over the years; and built a "Cubs room" at A-Z Industries where employees can hang out during breaks. And in the information that he faxed to *EW's* editors for this article was a document entitled, "Tomorrow Never Comes for the Pink Hat Guy — The true story of a Die-Hard Cubs fan and his passionate life-long journey down Heartbreak Lane."

Not shy about voicing his opinions about what the Cubs need to do to win, Anixter is a frequent caller on Chicago sports radio shows, and during the 1980s he used to bring large cue cards to Cubs' games, with advice for the Cubs' manager, at the time Lee Elia, telling him when to have his players bunt, steal, hit and run or start warming up in the bullpen.

While Anixter has endured hundreds of Cubs' losses over the years, he did enjoy plenty of personal success as a player and manager for the Anixter Bombers, a championship-caliber, fast-pitch softball team, and he was elected to the Illinois Softball Hall of Fame and Museum.

Because Anixter and his family bring the same sort of passion to selling wire and cable for A-Z Industries, you can see why they enjoy the industry as much as they do, and why over the years they have made such a mark on Chicago's electrical industry and the wire and cable business nationwide. ■

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