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Yardley software firm sold

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Yardley software-maker Prophet 21 Inc. said yesterday it was being acquired by Activant Solutions Inc., an Austin, Texas-based business-to-business software firm, for \$215 million.

Prophet 21 makes e-commerce software for distributors in industries including ones dealing in fasteners, electrical, medical and plumbing. It employs about 530, two-thirds of them in Yardley.

The firm is on pace to do \$85 million in sales this year, Prophet 21 chief executive officer Chuck Boyle said.

Founded in 1967, Prophet 21 became a publicly traded firm in 1994, then went private again when it was purchased for \$70 million in 2002 by private equity firms **LLR Partners Inc.** of Philadelphia and Thoma Cressey Equity Partners Inc. of Chicago and San Francisco.

The two firms are selling their investment, which will merge with an Activant subsidiary.

"We will be a part of Activant, but the Prophet 21 brand is a strong brand" and likely will continue to be used in some capacity, Boyle said.

Besides the Yardley headquarters, Prophet 21 has offices in Chicago; Denver; Elmwood Park, N.J.; Farmington, Conn.; and San Diego.

"All of our office locations will stay in place," Boyle said.

Activant CEO Larry Jones said in a statement that the purchase was part of his company's strategy to be the top provider of business-management software for small- and medium-size firms.

Prophet 21 will help to round out Activant's offerings, which include proprietary software and consulting for hardware stores, lumber and building materials suppliers, the automotive aftermarket, and wholesale distribution, Jones said.