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## Lifeline for troubled Caterpillar dealership

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MORE than 50 jobs have been saved in Lisburn with the rescue of construction plant dealer McCormick Macnaughton (NI) Limited, in a deal brokered by the administrators and the UK wing of Canadian firm Finning International.

The deal was confirmed yesterday by administrator Garth Calow from PricewaterhouseCoopers who was appointed on June 14 to handle the affairs of the business, itself a subsidiary of the McCormick Macnaughton group in the Republic of Ireland which was

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placed in receivership on June 10.

Since that time PwC has continued to manage the business and provide continuity of employment while negotiations were held to rescue the troubled dealership.

Mr Calow said that certain assets and contracts had been sold to Finning for a sum in excess of £3m. The deal underpins the 50-plus jobs involved in the business and a number of existing and ongoing contracts.

"I am delighted that we have reached a successful conclusion to a difficult process, within a demanding timeframe," said Mr Calow.

"This has safeguarded jobs and maintained a key construction equipment dealership within Northern Ireland.

"Finning International is one of the world's leading equipment dealerships and will bring its considerable experience to bear on developing and supporting the local market."

Finning International was established in 1933 and is based in Vancouver, British Columbia, and is the UK's main Caterpillar dealer. It is also the world's largest Caterpillar equipment dealer, also operating in Chile, Argentina, Bolivia and Uruguay.

The firm has also confirmed that it is in negotiations with the receiver of McCormick Macnaughton Limited to acquire the Caterpillar dealership in the Republic of Ireland.

"We are pleased to add this neighbouring territory to our established UK operations. We will be able to leverage our existing infrastructure and service expertise to complement our UK dealership," said Mike Waites, President and CEO of Finning. "Being awarded the dealer territory for Northern Ireland speaks highly of Finning's relationship with Caterpillar."

The firm's UK managing director Neil Dickinson added: "As part of this agreement, we acquire an active power systems portfolio, as well as access to opportunities in construction. We look forward to providing unrivalled service to customers in our new territory."

McCormick Macnaughton (NI) Ltd was established more than 50 years ago and operated within the McCormick Macnaughton Group as the sole Irish distributor of Caterpillar construction equipment, marine, and power generation products.

"This is a very satisfactory outcome for employees, creditors and for the local economy, particularly given the difficulties facing the construction industry and its suppliers at this time," added Mr Calow.