

Marlboro Man's Business is Smokin'

By Jim Rosenberg -

Published: August 23, 2007 4:50 PM ET

NEW YORK In the face of contraction in circulation and advertising, newspapers in every part of the country turned to Dario Designs this year to help devise more efficient operations, from newsrooms to distribution.

As the newspaper architects and operations consultants based in Marlboro, Mass., see one of their latest plant projects nearing completion in Wisconsin, the company confirmed nine other consulting projects, as well as unspecified ongoing work at several sites for Advance Publications.

The Janesville (Wis.) Gazette plant's design reflects the prairie style of Wisconsin's own Frank Lloyd Wright. The remote structure will replace the older offset operation at the downtown headquarters, where news and business will remain. Dario Designs reports that the building is designed to accommodate all office functions in the future, if necessary, and to expand all areas to twice their size.

Slated to take over production later this year, the 54,000-square-foot facility (E&P Online, April 5, 2006) will house thermal platesetting on two Kodak Trendsetters, variable-web-width printing on a four-tower KBA Comet, a newsprint storage area, and packaging and distribution using a Muller Martini SLS3000 inserter, and Quipp 500 Series stackers, bundle handling and Packman. Based on Quipp stacker and bottomwrapper technology, Packman stacks, wraps, prints and straps in a single operation, maintaining bundle integrity by containing bundles throughout the process. The singlewide, two-around press runs to pairs of upper and lower formers over a common double folder, where each folder is isolable for independent operation, giving the configuration flexibility for handling a variety of commercial product sizes. Provision also was made on press and in the controls for possible future addition of a heatset dryer.

Dario Designs provided masterplanning, production operations consulting, equipment requests for proposals, consulting, and full architecture and engineering (mechanical, electrical, structural, plumbing, fire protection, compressed air, vacuum, and process engineering).

While the Gazelle prepares to transfer production to

its new plant, Dario Designs is supplying a masterplan for packaging at The Dallas Morning News. Work there, says President Dario DiMare, eventually will extend to all operations, back into printing and out to distribution, at both the Plano and South Dallas plants. "We're looking for opportunities to save money in ways not explored in the past," said DiMare.

Going beyond finding ways to cut costs, the job in general seeks to improve revenue by determining and excelling at core competencies, DiMare says. For some clients, he says, that may include publishing the news and printing more than just the news, while for others it may make sense to outsource their printing or other operations.

Three hundred miles straight south on U.S. 77, the firm also is looking into all operations for a masterplan at the Victoria (Texas) Advocate, where the family-owned publisher is "willing and able to make changes, which should be a success story," says DiMare.

To the east, Dario Designs' will come up with a masterplan for the newsroom at the Houston Chronicle — primarily a facilities makeover for "more efficient and contemporary" operations, with new technologies, workflows and media, says DiMare, whose firm also will consult on packaging and distribution.

Dario Designs also is providing masterplanning for production, packaging, newsroom and business operations at two McClatchy Co. newspapers, The Sun News, Myrtle Beach, S.C., and The Bellingham (Wash.) Herald, and is consulting on operations for The Boston Globe and AFL Web Printing (newspapers and other publications), Voorhees, N.J.

In the Northwest, where The Columbian has almost completed its new downtown office, the city of Vancouver, Wash., wants to put a road through the newspaper's property. DiMare says his firm is exploring what it may mean to "do business and have the road go through at the same time."

Additionally, in the Southwest, Dario Designs is working on a green building project for Territorial Newspapers, the Tucson, Ariz.