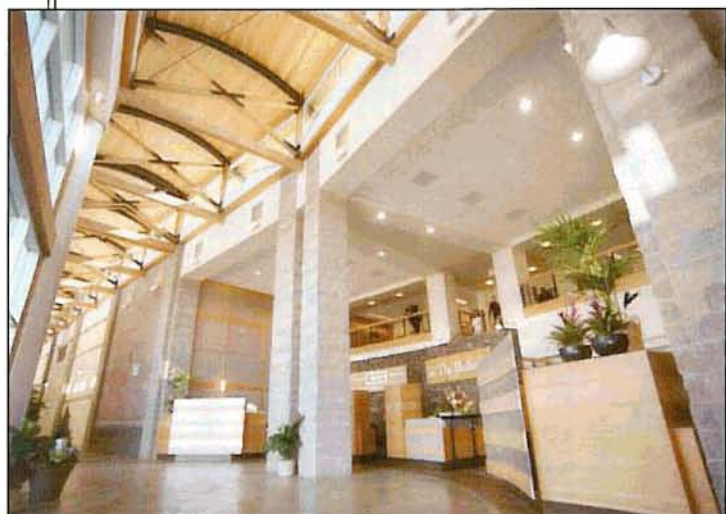


Editor & PUBLISHER

THE FOURTH ESTATE

THE COMMUNICATION LINK FOR THE NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY PUBLISHED INDEPENDENTLY EVERY WEEK SINCE 1884



Lobby of the new home of *The Bulletin* — and headquarters of its parent company, Western Communications — in Bend, Ore.

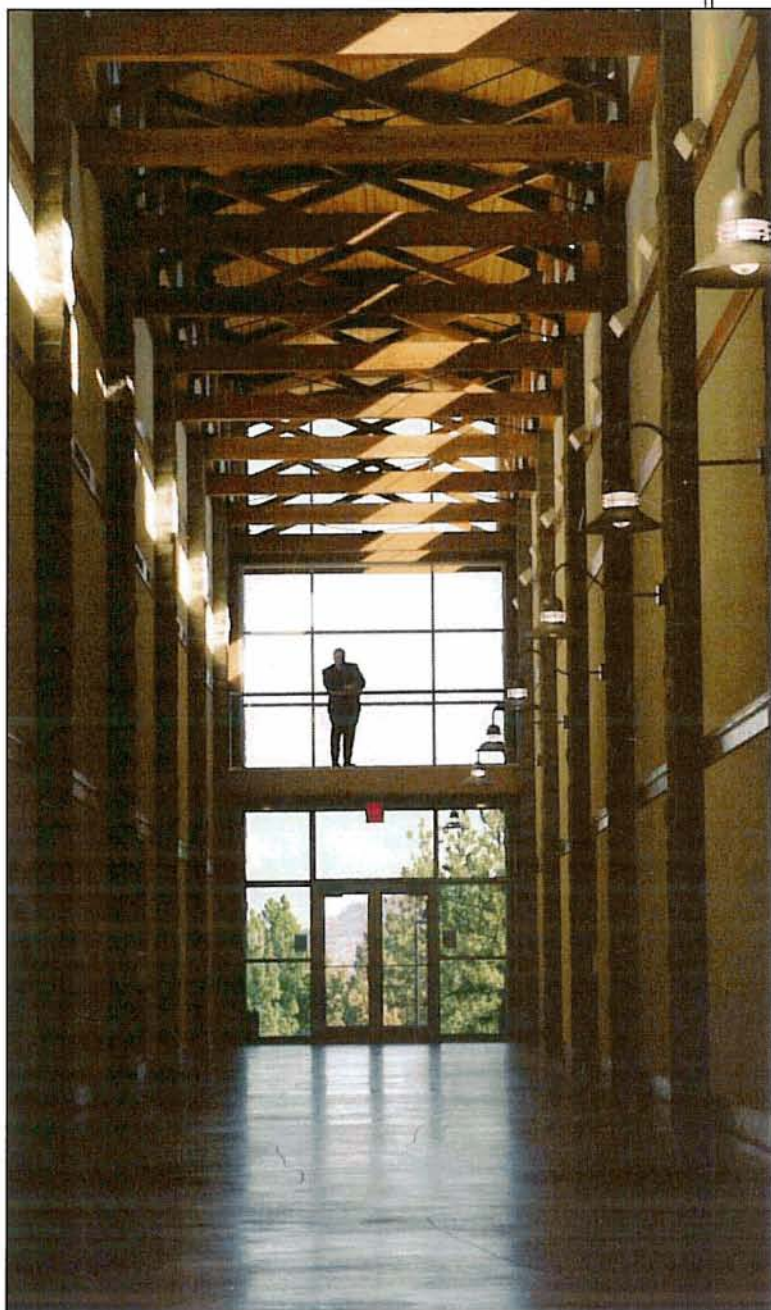
BY JIM ROSENBERG

DESIGNING A SUCCESSFUL NEWSPAPER office and production building is easy. Simply create something that looks good and works well — and make it compatible with the publisher's budget, as well as the paper's staff, equipment, work flow, and anticipated growth, then factor in local history, character, sensibilities, laws, climate, and topography.

In other words, make everybody happy.

Fortunately for the newspaper business, there are firms willing to try to do just that. Their services range from a brief, single-site consulting assignment long before the first shovel

Overlooking the building's museum area, with Pilot Butte behind him, architect Dario DiMare gives a *Bulletin* photographer a tour of his new workplace.



or hammer is lifted to multisite responsibility for everything from strategic planning to supervising construction to selecting equipment.

One young firm does all those things and more, and it does them only for newspapers. Begun six years ago as a debt-swamped, one-man operation by an architect who had specialized in newspaper projects for larger firms, Dario Designs of Framingham, Mass., has doubled in size in each of the past four years.

Late last month, founder Dario D.D. DiMare made his last official appearance in Bend, Ore., for the formal opening of the new, two-story headquarters of *The Bulletin* and the 27,000-circulation daily's parent company, Western Communications, parent of eight other Oregon and California newspapers.

At the same time, across the country, Dario Design's vice presi-



Between wings of offices, *The Bulletin's* large dining and conference areas get a southern exposure.

The secret life of PLANTS

dent, David Hogan, was in Alabama, meeting with executives from another 27,000-circulation daily, *The Anniston Star*, and its parent Consolidated Publishing Co., which recently approved plans for its own new headquarters. As in Bend, plans call for construction of a production and distribution plant at the location.

While *The Bulletin* now occupies its new site, the *Star* can only contemplate a wooded hillside. That difference in timing — along with the papers' similar circumstances and objectives — permits a revealing view of both the planning and execution of an architect's work.

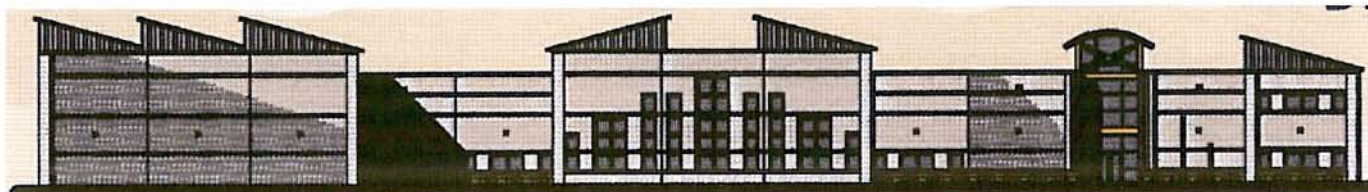
A delight in detail

As highly visible institutions, newspapers naturally are sensi-

DiMare and Hogan have designs on a sure sense of place and love of details

At *The Bulletin's* main entrance, the pressroom window arrangement (background, left of architect DiMare) approximates acclivity of Mount Bachelor outside and the press inside.





The Bulletin's west elevation: Newsprint storage is to the left, the pressroom is in the center, and the main corridor and offices are to the right.

tive to their own, and their communities', heritage as well as to the local social and natural environments. Both *The Bulletin* and the *Star* made these concerns clear to Dario Designs. For DiMare, that meant spending most of four months planning, researching, measuring, and thinking about a place called Bend. For Hogan, it required similar immersion in what Anniston and much of northeastern Alabama are all about.

The guiding principle seems simple enough: "It has to be your building," says DiMare. "It's mine for a while, but then I give it back to you."

What happened in between, at Bend, began with a stack of about 15 books that gave DiMare a feel for the area's natural and human history, from its geology to its economy. This research betrays what DiMare admits is an obsessive delight in detail, which, in its architectural expression, can distinguish a project.

Large and loquacious, DiMare is one about whom it's hard to believe that he ever lacked confidence. Raised in Ashtabula in northeastern Ohio, he entered Kent State University with poor grades — but graduated with honors, partly due to his discovery of architecture. He worked for a while during college as a mucker tunneling under Lake Erie to pay for a semester of study in Florence, Italy.

DiMare was recruited right out of Kent State by the Austin Co., based in Cleveland. He spent 11 years with Austin — where his first two jobs were for *The Star-Ledger* (Newark, N.J.) and *Newsday* (Melville, N.Y.). Although DiMare worked with clients in other industries, by the end of his tenure at Austin, he was specializing in newspapers.

DiMare had two things going for him

when he set out solo. Dow Jones & Co. Inc. awarded him a multiyear contract to modify all its print sites nationwide to accommodate the additional press capacity (including reconfiguration of existing presses) that enabled it to expand its daily editions and create its weekend edition; and, more generally, newspapers of all sizes had begun building again after a gradual recovery from their worst recession in 50 years.

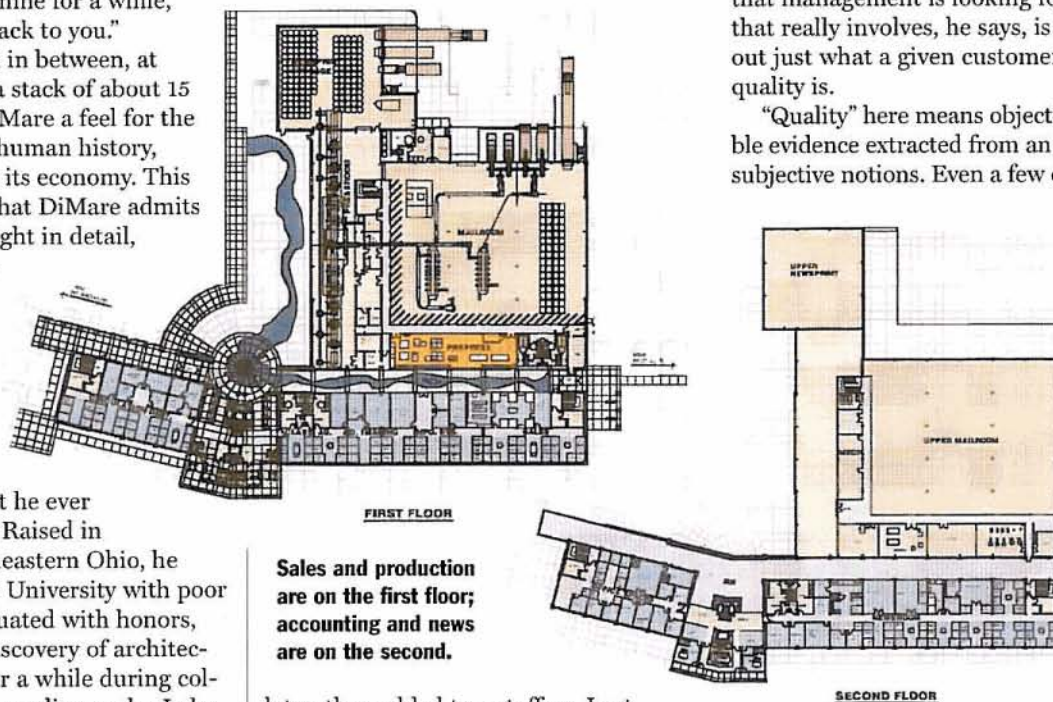
Soon, DiMare had enough work to take on David Hogan as partner. A year

may cover a vision for the future and certainly the budget to make it happen.

From there, he can sketch the outlines of a project, which include options to expand on-site, relocate and renovate, or build from scratch; its size (overall and departmental space, anticipated growth); the broad objectives (including any changes to the way work has been done); a timetable (single-date or phased completion); and the cost.

Before anything else, the architect needs a clear idea of the "quality levels" that management is looking for. What that really involves, he says, is finding out just what a given customer's idea of quality is.

"Quality" here means objective, tangible evidence extracted from an executive's subjective notions. Even a few questions



Sales and production are on the first floor; accounting and news are on the second.

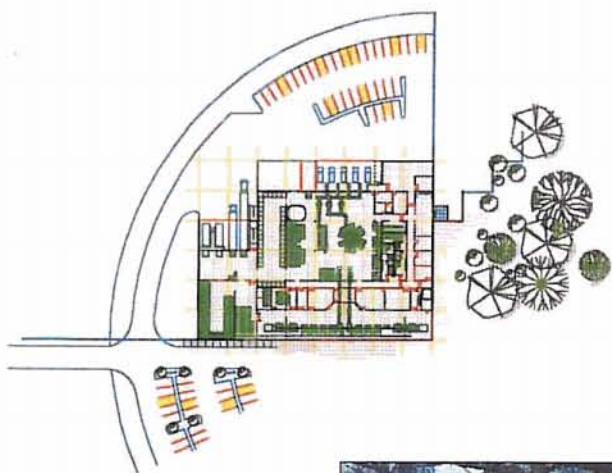
later, they added two staffers. Last year, they had eight employees, and Dario Designs expects to end this year with 16. "Then we're going to stop," says DiMare, adding that "we have a couple of other firms that work for us to help carry the overload. But that's it."

The order of things

Once DiMare or Hogan has acquired some sense of place in a customer's market and of the newspaper's heritage and role there, discussions with the owner

can make it pretty clear: Marble or concrete floors? Wood-panel or sheetrock walls? Brick or block exterior? Similar questions can be asked about lighting, furnishings, and assorted amenities.

"At that point," says DiMare, top managers' answers to those questions "set the tone for the whole project." The aim, he says, is to avoid designing "over or under expectations." Once the architect and top management are on the same wavelength, it's time to call in



The *Star's* site plan centers on hill's summit (office pavilions, right; production center, left). On-site, architect David Hogan wades through kudzu and Executive Editor Chris Waddle poses with Army warning sign.

department heads for what is generally about a two-hour meeting. There, DiMare or Hogan learns how, where, and by whom all work is accomplished at a particular newspaper, as well as any need for special rooms or equipment.

The thousands of details about plant, process, personnel, and equipment that emerge from the meeting are recorded in lengthy books. Later, Dario Designs enters those same data into a spreadsheet for each book. Spreadsheets are returned to appropriate managers, who are then asked to add data relating to what they expect to need in terms of staffing, workstations, and equipment at several years' intervals.

The spreadsheets ordinarily go back and forth a number of times between

managers and Dario Designs. "Everything has to have a number," says DiMare. "It has to have a projection."

Separate spreadsheets are created in similar fashion if a publisher asks DiMare to determine production equipment needs, query vendors, make recommendations or selections, or even negotiate the purchases. Information from management is used to identify a "design year" for which a structure is built. The year represents "how long you want the building to last until you put on an addition," says DiMare. A design typically will incorporate space and services for any business expansion planned for the near future. But if those plans are big enough and far enough in the future, he explains, it's often wisest to design provision for expansion into a building without actually *developing* the space.

In such cases, says DiMare, the cost of heating, lighting, and maintaining a large unused space over time can be greater than what is saved by building it

before it is really required for operations.

With all the detailed information at hand, it's time to lay out a design that best satisfies the publisher's original wishes, while planning "each space ... so you can grow without disrupting anything," DiMare explains.

If the publisher signs off on the master plan, the architect meets with contractors until agreement is reached on costs and scheduling. "If they give us an unrealistic number," says DiMare, then "we put our own estimate next to it," based on experience. Often, he says, quotes for a job come in low, only to rise later.

Agreed-upon figures and schedules are then delivered to the publisher along with the architect's drawings. A publisher then has the "scope, cost, and time in front of him," says DiMare. "He can make a decision now."

The same information allows DiMare's firm to work up a proposal for full architectural and engineering services on the project. The publisher can accept the proposal or take the package supplied by Dario Designs to another firm. At that point, however, DiMare's firm has the advantages of

knowing the customer's business and market — and of being the first to put hard numbers on an architecture and engineering proposal.

You can't fool Mother Nature

From the schematic phase, a project moves to design-development (with construction documents, bidding, and construction administration). Anniston has reached this stage, its owners having signed up Dario Designs for architecture and engineering. Groundbreaking for the 70,000-square-foot facility is expected in March, followed by approximately 16 months of construction.

In the schematic design for Anniston, every room or other space has been defined for a joined double structure that will house news and business offices for the *Star* and production and distribution facilities for that paper and *The Daily Home* of Talladega, which has offices 20 miles away. Approvals are in from all civil, structural, electrical, and mechanical engineers, and a topographic model has been prepared for the hilly site.

"One of the goals given us by the customer is to work with nature" on the wooded site, says DiMare. The design also reflects some of the area's steel industry history. Such considerations, he says, generate the form, shape, color, and other attributes of the building and its landscape.

The *Star's* current in-town building sits in an industrial zone that "hasn't aged particularly well," says its executive editor, Chris Waddle. "It's a building without windows. It's more like a factory," Waddle, who also is Consolidated Publishing's vice president for news, manages the Anniston project with Operations Vice President Ed Fowler.

Consolidated considered renovating the *Star's* current building as a production center and acquiring and renovating another downtown structure for its newsroom and offices. Dario Designs determined that option was feasible, but would provide no room for growth, according to Fowler.

And the extra cost of building at a new, greenfield site? "Surprisingly, not a lot," says Fowler, adding that he learned how costly renovations can be.

Opportunity knocked when the U.S.

government closed down Fort McClellan. A corner of the military base — "a wonderful tract of about 22 acres," says Waddle — adjoins a part of town with a park and museums. Moreover, a parkway under construction on the other side of the site will connect Interstate 20 with a planned new downtown.

Described by Waddle as a beautiful and highly visible tract (the state's highest point is nearby), one side is home to poplar, hickory, southern red oak, and other hardwoods, while the other is covered mostly in southern pine — the region's principal source of newsprint.

In areas where some trees must be removed for construction, the project team is working with the county agricultural extension agent to identify those that should be preserved. Wildflowers on the site will be harvested and protected during construction, then returned to the landscape. Waddle emphasizes the aim of using native flora throughout the site. (The county agent was awarded a grant to make a video record of how a modern corporation can create a home for itself with minimal environmental and aesthetic impact.)

Going into the project, Consolidated prepared a 20-page report on what it hoped to achieve aesthetically at the site. "We wanted to honor the environmental legacy of our region," says Waddle, and do it "on a human scale."

At the same time, he says, the company sought to recognize its own paper's history and the area's industrial legacy. The editor relates a visit to Anniston by Henry Grady, when Atlanta's famous Reconstruction editor recommended the local paper adopt the name *The Hot Blast* in honor of the area's blast furnaces and the blasts from its editorial pages. After several consolidations, says Waddle, "we outgrew the name."

Those hot blasts, however, will be



Hogan, engineer Mark Stephens, landscape architect Jim Hogan (no relation) compare lobby drawings to staked site.

remembered on the hilltop. Museum-style exhibits in the main entrance area will focus on the newspaper, the steel industry, and the region in general. The exhibits will be something of an extension of the city's nearby "museum row," which will be connected to the new building by a walkway.

In addition to an area dedicated to online and streaming-video production, the new building will include a "think tank" set aside and enclosed for concentration,

brainstorming sessions, and other special meetings. "We also think that will happen outdoors," says Waddle, calling attention to planned patios.

The landscape also will include waterways, a pond, and paths, features that mirror those of the adjacent park.

Gridding and bearing it

The layout's underlying geometry is most evident in the site's eastern structure, which will house the business and editorial offices that stretch out from the main entrance in arms perpendicular to each other. Production and distribution will occupy a similarly oriented structure extending west from the entrance.

Using a grid of eight-foot segments, Hogan created 64-foot-square "pods" or "bays" — "pavilions," in the customer's less mechanical, but accurate description — surmounted by clerestory windows and broad roofs, the slope of which carries them eight feet beyond the walls. The long overhang, explains DiMare, keeps the hot, high summer sun in the Heart of Dixie from hitting the windows while admitting direct sunlight in winter. All the while, he points out, employees still have views into the woods.

Answering the question — Do clerestory lighting and hip roofs amount to wasted space? — DiMare says their appearance fulfills the owners' goal of harmonizing with the natural surroundings. They are, as Hogan puts it,

"intended to be an allegory for the tree canopies and the sheltering form of a tree." Furthermore, says DiMare, the extra height provides an escape space for interior heat. Combined with the overhanging roof, it holds down the cost of cooling. These features were among the many items that faced engineers' approvals. Especially when it comes to cost justification, says DiMare, "these guys are the reality check."

And with the pavilions' arrangement and empty overhead space, "there won't be many barriers to line of sight" from one to another, adds Waddle.

As for the grid's eight-by-eight-foot squares, DiMare says the dimensions are "dictated by the newspaper's cubicle sizes in most cases" — adjusted to the closest and most economical construction-materials size. Although the dimensional building blocks are all identical, they can be used in larger multiples and combined into almost any overall shape or size.

At the same time, there are few if any small quantities or custom-cuts of materials, keeping costs down and simplifying construction. A grid also means that services (illumination, electricity, air, water) can be rationally apportioned and spaced, with their locations congruent with structural elements (for example, centered on or between structural supports). The result, says DiMare, is that "everything would line up with the window mullions, and walls wouldn't hit glass."

Efficient and economical, grids also make future rearrangement of interior workspaces easier.

The favored eight-foot measure also is carried into the vertical dimension. As seen from the main entrance, the press hall rises by only that much above the ground because "we hide the height" in the hillside, says Waddle. At the hill's summit, the earth contains roughly half

the height of the production plant.

In all, Waddle calls the project's context a "natural symbiosis"; credits Hogan's design with meeting the company's aesthetic, environmental, and social standards; and boasts that between Atlanta and Birmingham, Huntsville and Montgomery, "there's not another architectural gem to match this." Within the given budget, he adds, Consolidated's owners "have really let us have the freedom to do it."

The project's timing is such that it's been "a wonderful tonic for the newspaper," says Waddle. Though the fort is gone, the government built the military's Anniston Depot. Honda is build-

the area's economy and boost the paper's advertising.

"I'd love to be ... into the production center in time to print next fall's bigger products, but I don't really think that's feasible," says Fowler. "That's just part of the price of progress."

Around the Bend

A year or more earlier, and in the opposite corner of the country, Bend was experiencing an economic boom of its own — one that also had subcontractors so tied up that contractors had to drop out of bidding to build *The Bulletin's* new home, according to DiMare.

Similar to those at the *Star*, *The*

Bulletin's work spaces were designed six-by-six, six-by-eight, and eight-by-eight feet, which gave DiMare a common 24-foot length (four sixes or three eights) with which to work in designing larger areas and the overall structure.

And just as in Anniston, all of those larger areas have been designed and located, relative to one another, to double in size, if and when nec-



As in other new pressrooms, natural illumination augments electrical lighting in *The Bulletin's* pressroom, thanks to windows above and in front of the press.

ing a minivan factory a few miles away. And thanks to some big new retailers, including a just-opened mall that placed full-page ads in the *Star*, "we're enjoying some retail success," he says. "It couldn't come at a better time."

Because the project essentially comprises two buildings, says Waddle, fast-tracking the production facility would permit using its anticipated extra page and color capacity to exploit the retail boom. But that's unlikely, says Fowler, because "all the contractors are telling us that the time line on the project will be longer than we like," owing to a labor scarcity — workers are busy building the new workplaces that are helping power

essary, without displacing any other area or disrupting any other operation. A principal design feature that will not change with growth is maintaining the shortest possible distances for the movement of all materials through production and packaging. In most cases, transport will simply follow somewhat longer straight lines.

But while Anniston was built on steel making, Bend's legacy is in lumber. From individual beams to the texture of the concrete, "every detail of that building came from the lumber mills," says DiMare of *The Bulletin's* new home.

The Bulletin's first home, in fact, was a log cabin. In 1953, 50 years after it was

founded, the paper was sold to Robert W. Chandler. His daughter, Western Communications President Elizabeth C. McCool, presided over the recently completed \$12-million project.

For the investment, Western and *The Bulletin* now have an 87,000-square-foot headquarters on a 10-acre tract southwest of town that was annexed by the city before construction started.

At its former site since 1966, the paper had outgrown several additions. "This gave us another reason to buy a new press," Operations Director Mike Greening told *ESP* at the outset of the project.

To maintain the flavor of local design, the city's existing buildings were presented as examples. But all suggested a price tag higher than the budgeted figure. Some economies worked quite handsomely, however, such as concrete block instead of brick. Problems throughout the process were mostly budget-driven, and most of that was attributable to the city's design guidelines, according to DiMare. The guidelines included "amenities" such as a museum (as in Anniston), which is just off the main corridor.

DiMare also was able to cost-effectively, and -attractively, comply with state-mandated design regulations. "Oregon law says that, for every roof drain, you have to have a backup drain," says DiMare. Drawn up to protect roofs from the weight of water pooled behind clogs, the law also requires two completely separate lines to the sewer. While appropriate in Oregon's chronically rain-soaked region west of the Cascade Mountains, the rules make no sense for the drier interior, much of it high desert.

"That law is stupid for Bend," DiMare declares. So, instead of full downspouts, "all my overflow pipes pop out of the wall," he says. This not only reduced piping — and the work to install it — from 500 feet to 30 feet, but also created waterfalls off the building into pools below, whence the runoff is channeled to outlets that allow it to "cascade over a cliff."

Water actually flows from storm sewers



Architect DiMare and the view from the upper walkway at the east end of *The Bulletin* building's museum area.

at the top of a hill, down over lava rock and into catch basins that drain back into the sewer system. "They liked that so much that they took some of the other drains and did the same thing," DiMare recalls. "Saved 'em money — and it looks cool."

DiMare readily confesses that he was inspired to adapt a similar design by Eero Saarinen that he'd seen in Europe and used while at the Austin Co. in his master plan for the aquarium in Mystic, Conn.

An important and valued part of the local landscape, water was a natural design component anyway — and not only its sight but also its sound. Where there are pipes, they're often in the form of chain drains. Starting 30 feet above the ground, these consist of two-foot-long sections of six-inch-diameter pipe connected by two-foot-long bundles of chain. A lot of the water stays in or on the pipes because it tends to flow along the chains. Much also simply falls from one section of pipe or length of chain to the next section, creating a loud, steady patter.

Now, "when the elements change, so does the building," says DiMare. "The building is meant to be fun, and that's part of the fun of it." In fact, he adds, the publisher liked it so much, "he made us

run water into the pipes so he could turn it on and make it happen."

Power of the pyramid

The building's interior and exterior hang together and reflect the environment. For example, press-hall windows follow the levels of the new press, creating a pyramid form that mirrors nearby Mount Bachelor, which is the focus of year-round recreation and a major economic draw for the area.

Overall, "the slope of the building came from the slope of the mountains," DiMare explains. One end of the building looks back at the past, to Pilot Butte — a natural landmark that guided pioneers to the mountain pass and fostered the area's settlement. This end of the building houses its museum, which contains items from the newspaper's past.

The other end of the building has a view of Mount Bachelor, representing the lumber and leisure that contribute to the area's economy. At this end, construction was allowed to trail off, says DiMare, with the enclosed area giving way to bare structural members and eventually to a paved walk, suggesting a future to be built upon.

Coursing roughly along the axes of the building in Bend is one more distinguishing feature that represents place and "reflects nature and the elements," in DiMare's view. Within a concrete walkway that separates prepress production on one side and offices on the other, and that makes its way down the length of the press hall, is a flowing pattern of varying coloration. It reproduces the course of the Deschutes River — and, at the central entrance way, where the axes intersect and the river bulges, is the bend. ■

Elevations of planned headquarters for *The Anniston Star* show hip roofs' height and overhang as well as the production center's hidden height.

