

LOUISVILLE'S PLANS: OFFSET AND ON-SITE

'C-J' will build a plant next door to house a long, tall press line

BY JIM ROSENBERG

PENDING LOCAL GOVERNMENT APPROVAL, *THE COURIER-Journal* in three years will roll off a 284¹/₂-foot-long press line in a new, \$80-million production center in the block next to its Louisville, Ky., headquarters.

The 222,332-circulation (284,820 Sunday) Gannett Co. Inc. daily chose to remain in downtown Louisville, after exploring suburban sites in three counties. Though the newspaper company owns the property where it proposes to build its 135,000-square-foot facility, the city first must close a short stretch of road that separates that four-acre tract from the existing 7¹/₂-story building.

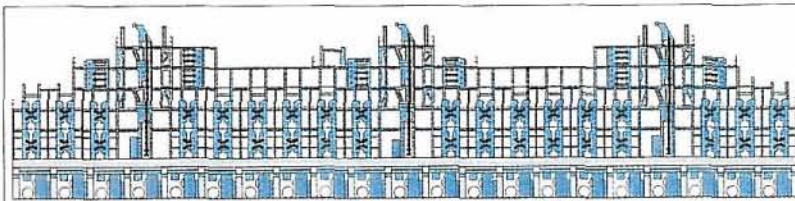
The street closing seems likely, and the mayor told the *C-J* that the city also would pay to improve landscaping and sidewalks on the streets that run the length of the newspaper's property. Publisher and President Edward E. Manassah said his paper is considering "any of the available [financial] incentives" for development that are offered by the city and state, and is "taking a look at taxable ... industrial revenue bonds."

The paper reported that the mayor earlier had arranged a deal in which the paper sold the county school system five acres on which to build a stadium, the school system agreed not to raze an old building that others wanted to preserve, and the mayor promised to push for closing the street that now prevents construction of an adjoining production plant.

The new plant will take the *C-J* from four lines of Goss and Hoe letterpress, each enhanced by two KBA Colormax flexo units, to one long line of 18 four-high offset Colora towers and three folders — also from KBA — that can be run as one or several presses. The greater capacity and

speed is expected to increase and improve color printing and afford later deadlines and early delivery. Current equipment (some of it 50 years old) is slower, and the only color is supplied by the flexo units.

A switch to offset was there from the start — "as soon as I originated the plans, years ago," said Production Vice President Michael Przybylek. "There was no decision.



In a plant parallel to the current building, the Colora will be the biggest in the country.

It was always offset. There wasn't even a discussion." Beyond being a "proven technology" that does not suffer the same "printing defects" that crop up in flexo, Przybylek said the "No. 1 reason" for not converting to full flexo was the price of its plates — roughly triple that for offset plates. And the 170,000-plate-per-year paper would see those costs balloon even more because of its anticipated increase in four-color printing.

Przybylek said the choice of printing process and fate of the flexo units never

came up in discussions with KBA. Gannett Production Vice President Mark S. Mikolajczyk "will decide what to do with those Colormax units," said Przybylek.

To ship in 2003, the Colora will be the largest press sold in the United States by the York, Pa., affiliate of Koenig & Bauer AG, Würzburg, Germany. To be erected on a concrete substructure, the press will comprise five towers capable of printing four colors on one side and black on the other and 13 towers for printing four colors on both sides of the sheet. Six of the latter also will accommodate two webs each, for black and spot-color printing on both sides of each web. Web width will be 50 inches, and cut-off will be 21 inches.

The sale includes 21 Pastostar reelstands, automatic ink feed, 28 turner bars with bay-window web leads, skip slitters, six formers in three stacked pairs, two double folders (KF5 2:5:5, KF3 2:3:3), a single KF5 folder, nine EAE monitor and control consoles with Print4 production-scheduling and presetting software, service and diagnostics, a raster image processor interface for presetting ink keys with prepress data, provision for a plate/film scanner interface, and an interactive training package using simulation software from Sinapse Graphic International.

The *C-J* said it has no plans to add to its work force of 1,000, 90% of whom are full-time employees. Dario Designs Inc., Framingham, Mass., was responsible for the concept and master plan, including programming, budget, and scheduling. An architecture and engineering contract is to be awarded shortly.

The plant is to include newsprint storage, space for which is now leased. Use of space now occupied by presses has not been planned, but other production areas — managers' office, break

room, ink tanks — will be given over to insert storage, according to Przybylek.

The mailroom on the third floor handles daily inserting on three older Harris machines. Renovated space on the first floor "became our Sunday inserting center," said Przybylek, after a Heidelberg 630 was installed two years ago. When the new production plant is up and running, he said, another 630 will be bought and the two mailrooms will be consolidated on the first floor. Also, a fifth Cannon cart loader will be added to those bought in 1998. ■