

## Flint Journal motors into future with new site

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PUBLISHER

**FLINT, Mich.** — The Flint Journal corralled its far-flung press and mailroom operations under one roof with the opening of its \$30 million downtown production center.

The Journal (daily, 84,437; Sunday 103,720) formerly handled inserts, warehousing and printing from separate facilities located in various parts of Flint. The new 80,000-square-foot facility, anchored by a MAN Roland Inc. RegioMAN press, means Journal staffers can now oversee all press and postpress functions from a single location.

“The transporting of inserts and printed sections from facility to facility was costly and time-consuming,” said Bob White, The Journal’s operations director.

The Journal’s new shaftless 50-inch press is configured as four eight-couple towers and two 2:3:3 folders double-out. Mirroring its sister newspaper’s workflow in Bay City, Mich., the Journal deployed two UV-setter 57 computer-to-conventional-plate imagers from basysPrint, fed by Prolmage’s NewsWay workflow app. The press is managed by MAN Roland’s Pecom control system.

The press replaced a 50-year-old letterpress.

### Bolstered postpress

The mailroom, meanwhile, was also significantly upgraded, equipped with two SLS-3000 inserters and a buffer system from GMA Inc., tie-lines, narrow stackers and Viper bottomwrappers from Quipp Systems Inc. and inkjet printers from Prism Inc. It’s the first time the GMA and Quipp equipment has ever been integrated via GMA’s WinLines software, White said.

The communication link means that the inserters and the buffer system can transmit bundle construction information directly to the inkjet printers, stackers and bottomwrappers. The result: zoned, carrier-specific bundles of varying quantities of newspapers, White said.

Because The Journal is an afternoon paper that relies on youth carriers, the automatic completion of labeled packages ready for carrier delivery makes distribution more efficient, according to White.

An interlock installed by Quipp within each tie-line sends a signal back to the inserter in the event of an



Left: Bob White, operations director for The Flint Journal  
Right: The Flint Journal's new facility in Flint, Michigan

interruption downstream. The signal allows to insertor to either redirect the papers to the next tie-line or simply shut down until the issue is resolved.

### No-nonsense design

The Journal’s new printing center began life as a no-nonsense production facility that, midway in the design process, was given a \$475,000 cash infusion by Journal owner Advance Publications Inc. and the Ruth Mott Foundation to spruce up the facade as part of a civic mandate to enhance downtown Flint.

“We took the bulk of this money and concentrated it in the prominent end view of the press ball, a reinterpretation of the existing building, done in glass and metal,” said David Hogan, vice president of Dario Designs Inc., which orchestrated the building.

DDI also lifted some of the printer’s marks from the existing 80-year-old Journal building. Those were etched into the glass facade of the new structure. Finally, 26 original artwork medallions, representing the communities served by The Journal, were put into place.

“Because of the alternating transparent and translucent materials and the great view of the press, this building is really a cool nighttime sight,” Hogan said.

“Dario went the extra mile for us,” White said. “They had to redesign the project midstream in order to accommodate the city of Flint’s wishes.” ■