

PRESS SITE UNDER CONSTRUCTION

NAC staffers looking forward to new plant's benefits

By Alan Rindlisbacher

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Employees of Salt Lake City's Newspaper Agency Corp. are counting down the days before the October move into their new facility.

In the meantime, the press hall is 95% complete and the first of three TKS Color Top 5000 UD presses is expected to be delivered in July. First test runs of printed paper are scheduled for the first quarter of 2006. Layton Construction Co. Project Manager Jake Greenland said work in the reel and mailrooms is 85% complete, with equipment scheduled for delivery and installation this fall.

A record-breaking wet spring has hampered construction work, requiring crews to lengthen shifts and work Saturdays, but the project is still on schedule.

Big shift

The move to the new facility will be a considerable change for the 700 NAC employees currently working in multiple locations in downtown Salt Lake City. The NAC press facility will be a multifunctional building, handling the printing functions for The Salt Lake Tribune and Deseret Morning News, which contract with NAC under a joint operating agreement. The facility will also house the administration, accounting, sales, advertising and layout functions of NAC.

NAC employees working out of a seven-story building downtown now have to deal with cramped and confining workspaces dispersed over several floors. Work and collaboration are stifled because meetings often require a trip up or down the stairs or elevator.

Disjointed operations

NAC's growth over the years has led to disjointed operations in other parts of the production process as well. While the presses are now in the heart of Salt Lake City, the reel storage area and secondary printing facilities are located in a warehouse a number of blocks away, creating a logistical challenge for NAC employees transferring newsprint.

Meantime, the existing mailroom dock, located on a narrow mid-block street, is a beehive of activity as delivery trucks orchestrate loading and distribution of papers. Printing and distribution challenges were doubled when the Deseret Morning News switched publication to morning delivery, mirroring The Tribune's distribution. The challenges will be alleviated when all functions are brought under one roof at the new facility.

NAC employees will move nine miles from downtown Salt Lake City into a business park in suburban West Valley City. The move will bring geographic and cultural change. Some of the amenities of an urban center will be replaced with the open spaces of a suburban business park. The facility is located on an elevated slope. Thus, instead of looking out a high rise office buildings,

employees in the new facility will observe the towering Wasatch and Oquirrh mountain ranges, which surround the Salt Lake Valley.

From closed to open

Employees will move from a closed vertical office environment to an open floor plan of 70,000 square feet on two levels.

The architect, Dario Designs Inc., designed the facility with spacious windows, which allow great views and an abundance of natural lighting.

To that end, office workstations have low-rise walls, maintaining an airy feeling throughout the open office space environment. The architectural theme of the building exterior is complemented by an interior cloaked with the same color schemes and designs, all of which create an atmosphere that captures the rugged mountains of the Salt Lake Valley.

Large radiused walls in the office area mimic the outside look with honed-block placed to represent an abstract pixelated mountain range. Carpeting and high-tech vinyl composite flooring further enhance the office environment.

Much better

All in all, NAC's new press and administrative facility will be substantially superior to the organization's current situation. State-of-the-art equipment and technology, placed in a facility where all functions are under one roof, will have a dramatic impact upon employee efficiency and productivity.

Located in a business park where supply and product flows will be effortless and unconstrained, the plant will also enhance the abilities of NAC to serve its customers and the readers of its printed papers. Employees, though apprehensive about the efforts it will take to make such a major move, look forward to being in the new facility that will significantly improve their work and theft working environment.

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A worker smooths the foundation in the press hall at NAC's new production facility.