

# WIND, WATER and WEALTH

Geography, demography drive move to modern headquarters



Construction of the *Naples (Fla.) Daily News'* new home begins next year, with production aiming to be under way in the summer of 2008.

BY JIM ROSENBERG

IN FEW PLACES DO SOCIAL AND NATURAL FORCES SO CONSPICUOUSLY join to test a newspaper's operational and commercial capabilities as along southern Florida's Gulf Coast. And there, perhaps, no local market is more promising than Collier County, the state's largest, although not nearly its most populous. Spared the worst of hurricanes for almost 50 years, it has seen a growing influx of money and jobs for most of those decades.

Through the 1990s, Collier County had the country's second-fastest growing full-time population, and it remains a growth area. The population since 2000 has risen 28%, to 320,000, and is estimated to reach almost 390,000 in five years, according to the Editor & Publisher Market Guide. State sources project a higher figure by 2010.

The county boasts the state's highest household income and one of the

country's highest per-capital incomes. Its 3% unemployment rate last year was below the state average and well below the country's 4.6%. More than three-quarters of residents are under 65, and the labor force's 32% growth over five years is more than twice that of the state and dwarfs the national figure of 6%.

Which isn't to say the county is immune to broader trends. Real estate is in the doldrums, and the local daily's circulation, having steadily risen from one winter to the next, sagged during the last seasonal surge of visitors and part-year residents. After modest gains, summer circ was flat in 2006.

The audience profile nevertheless seems ideal for a newspaper: affluent,

educated, and heavily in the traditional newspaper-reading age bracket, but also with an ample 18- to 34-year-old cohort to woo. And if those same demographics also heavily suggest subscriptions for *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, residents need a local paper to stay abreast of local developments, in every sense of the word.

When that paper grows with its market it becomes part of a story that reflects the county's interests in promoting prosperity while preserving what makes the place special. It is, after all, an area of wealth (claiming more millionaires per capita than any other place in Florida) and development (a Catholic university and surrounding town being built from scratch on 5,000 acres), of wildlife (Florida panthers, ghost orchids, wood storks) and preservation (the Everglades, Big Cypress Swamp). And tensions between development and conservation, and a desire for the benefits of both, are understandably heightened in a county where almost 80% of the land is protected.

### **\$2 million before even building**

When E.W. Scripps's Naples Daily News planned a new headquarters and production facility it preferred to remain in its home county, though it could not expand sufficiently at its Naples address. Not surprisingly, when it sought a site some distance from downtown, there was resistance.

Early last fall the paper quoted a county commissioner who welcomed its executive offices "with open arms," but did not think the production plant needed to be "in the backyard of a residential area." Ultimately his was the lone vote against rezoning that allowed the paper to build in his district.

About 10 miles northeast of Naples, the site was created from five parcels, including a former strawberry farm. Much initial debate by the advisory-only planning commission concerned provision of green space and a buffer area around the headquarters.

The Naples Daily News will not be

the only business in the area, and it agreed to added buffers and noise abatement, a road extension and additional traffic-control device, and maintenance of a lake at the site. The Collier County Economic Development Council went to bat for the paper, explaining the reason for the parcels' configuration and saying that because of its size and plan to add jobs, the Daily News was eligible for fast-tracking to avoid the time and cost that sent other businesses to other counties. The paper even had a letter of no objection from the area homeowners association.

Approved by planning commissioners



Looking south across Immokalee Road, the future home of the *Naples Daily News* will occupy land once partly planted as a self-pick strawberry farm.

in spring 2006, the proposal was shot down by county commissioners that summer at which point the paper began looking outside the county. By early fall, however, the paper asked that rezoning be reconsidered.

The commission agreed, but not before the homeowners association had changed its mind. According to the paper's account, residents complained of not being alerted to changes in the plan and were concerned "about traffic and noise from what would be an around-the-clock operation." The newspaper responded with concessions that included more landscaping and more restrictions on signs and lighting. As for a planned 75-foot-high press hall, "we kept the height down as low as we can," says Scripps Newspaper Division Operations Director Frank Wolfe, noting that it comes in under 70 feet, even though the

nearby hospital gets "a little more leeway at 80 feet."

A year ago last week, four of five county commissioners voted to rezone at a meeting lasting more than five hours to hear dozens of speakers for both sides, before a crowd that overflowed out to a hallway and into a training room linked by video.

Last month, all that remained were some specific permits and approvals. "We're close on everything," says Wolfe. "We're hoping that we can break ground in January '08."

Satisfying provisions of the permitting process, however, has come at a cost "in excess of two million dollars," with most of that "in impact fees" says Operations Director and project manager Tom Sewall.

Impact fees on new construction pay for police, schools, roads, and other services that must expand to accommodate growth. A companion issue, affordable housing, has generated considerable debate. Among at least a dozen measures under consideration to support such housing are commercial development fees ranging from 50 cents

to almost \$50 per square foot, which may substantially boost the headquarters' cost. The low fee, floated last year is a likely outcome; the higher range failed a vote in January. The newspaper company made a good-faith commitment to affordable housing, according to Sewall. The cost probably will be determined when construction commences.

Elsewhere, newspapers and other businesses that build offices and/or plants often are lured with tax and other incentives to stay in a city or county — especially where that means moving to a zone slated for redevelopment. Even then, newspapers know they're not just erecting another building. The in-city structures are designed to raise their visibility and polish their image while satisfying local sensibilities — whether *The Kansas City Star's* gleaming piece of the future in an old industrial part of



the city the Knoxville News Sentinel's beacon to those on the streets and out on the interstate, or Fort Wayne (Ind.) Newspapers' respectful compatibility with the look of an adjacent old residential district/

### Sun, sand, and water

If there was concern in Naples that the Daily News would move into a utilitarian metal or concrete box, most soon-to-be neighbors should be relieved, even pleased.

Until all bids are returned, Wolfe can only estimate that the cost of the total project will be in excess of \$90 million. With the real estate market down, "it may be a good time to be building," he says, adding however that while residential construction is off, the commercial side seems to be holding up.

Plans, drawings and conversations all suggest the paper will buy a handsome building able to stand up to storms, as well as some of the most modern newsroom, pressroom, and mailroom systems available.

Just off Immokalee Road, a major east-west artery and a half-mile from U.S. 41, the principal north-south route other than the interstate highway (and with some new north-south roads to aid distribution), the new headquarters will be a little closer to areas the paper needs to reach, such as the "very important market" of Bonita Springs a few miles north, Wolfe says, and the new Ave Maria community, about 25 miles due east, where once there were only farms. Having visited the nascent town and university this summer, he calls it "a beautiful place. We intend that there'll be growth out there." As much as it protects the building's operations from the environment, the project must protect the environment from the building and operations. Aiming for minimal impact,

planning, for example, took account of water run-off as well as winds, according to Wolfe. "We're doing everything we can, certainly, so that it will be environmentally protected," he says, acknowledging the very stringent local codes.

And then there are aesthetic concerns, from landscape to building design. "There's a lot of money in Naples, and they want to keep it looking really nice," says Wolfe.

Plans for the headquarters suggest nothing less. "It's based on the sun, the

firm worked, in some cases to taking over already-begun projects (E&P, Nov. 5, 2001).

"That's our first job for Scripps," DiMare says, adding that the personal familiarity helped. But then, if the architect was new to the company, so, too, was Sewall when Dario Designs was chosen to provide architectural and engineering services. "Think of what a huge career gamble it is," remarks Dario Designs Vice President David Hogan, who heads the project for his firm.

Beyond whatever anxieties may come with new people and a big project, Sewall and Hogan signed on just when

Scripps was least likely to tolerate trouble. "The client has been burned," says Hogan, adding that "because of Treasure Coast, there's huge sensitivity" at Scripps and at his firm.

He refers to Scripps' plant in St. Lucie County on the Atlantic Coast, where, just months after its completion in 2004, two hurricanes in quick succession breached the \$5 million structure in the same place (E&P, Nov. 11, 2002; Feb. 2005).

While deeply enthusiastic about the Naples project, DiMare and Hogan

have no illusions about what's at stake. Much more difficult than keeping a plant watertight or dealing with other technical details, Hogan said earlier this year, is "pleasing a bunch of people who are very doubtful and critical." Six months later, they may have cleared that hurdle. An attractive building that supports operational needs, the new headquarters, in Wolfe's view, will be "a showplace without being extravagant. They have done a fabulous job with it."

Of course, it still has to get built. DiMare's original options included using the existing property, a lot across the street, or a greenfield site. But a decision wasn't as simple as selecting one among them, Hogan says, explaining that many versions emerge by selecting and modifying elements from the three basic options. Once the choice was made, an initial design was presented, to which incremental changes were made over the course of year of monthly meetings with



Dario Designs rendering showing how the new facility will be sited.

sand, and the water," says Dario DiMare, president of Dario Designs. General features of the wide and symmetrical earth-toned two-story with ample shaded fenestration do reflect the flat, sandy, sunny land between gulf and glade. Other features borrow from those inland and coastal basins that give the place its singular identity — rainwater channeled into a cascade at the entrance hail, and the foam-capped wave's profile that describes the top of the press hall visible just over a rear corner.

### New names on a big project

The project goes back at least 2 1/2 years, to a Dario Designs masterplan. When the operations director departed in 2005, his successor came from the Kalamazoo Gazette, one of several Advance Publications Michigan sites where the Marlboro, Mass., architectural

the client. The final design took form in early spring, says Hogan.

In a snapshot, the Daily News is moving business, news and production from 90,000 square feet downtown to 185,000 square feet outside North Naples. The extra room will accommodate rack storage, but “nothing elaborate,” says Sewall. It will sit on 18 acres, with other land involved in the transaction to be set aside for preserves and water management. Offices are on two levels in front of a tall press bay. Post-press operations are on the same level as the reelroom.

Access is from Immokalee Road, which is being widened. But with no traffic problems at the current site, Sewall expects little difference in ease of taking or making deliveries. The new site is only three miles farther from I-75 and no farther from the paper’s four distribution centers. Newsprint will be bucked in (a rail line just down the road has been inactive for at least 20 years).

The plant is to be completed before the offices. “We will probably go out to bid near the end of the year for a [local] general contractor,” says Wolfe, with the hope of transferring operations by the summer of 2009 — “assuming we don’t have any hurricanes?”

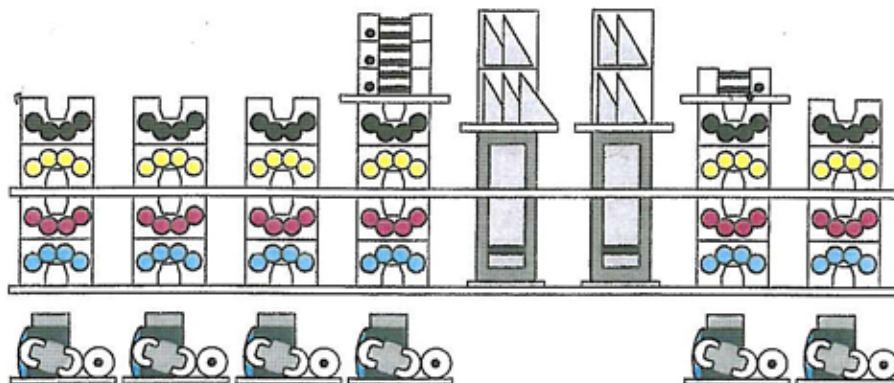
### Donna’s legacy

It’s not a safe assumption, and the Daily News is preparing. “We have spent an enormous amount of time on making the building hurricane resistant, and on power,” says Sewall. Winter weather brought snow and ice to Michigan, but in Florida Sewall got a quick introduction to summer storms when Hurricane Wilma showed up shortly after he did. He recalls experiencing four hurricanes at four intensity levels that year.

Still, it’s been a lucky location for almost 50 years. In 1992, Andrew blasted the area around Miami with 145-mph sustained winds and gusts to 175 mph. A local forecast had it coming across the state at Naples, but it veered away. Twelve years passed. Then came Charley, “a compact, powerful storm that missed us to the north,” Pressroom Manager Casey Cote says. Headed for Tampa, it turned and struck Punta Gorda, north of Naples.

“We never lost power for more than two to four hours at a time,” he remembers. But while the paper may be on a reliable part of the grid, he says, power surges caused repeated press shut-downs. Even then, he adds, the crew learned to cope, and “we did not lose the web.”

When Wilma swiped the coast a year later, “the biggest issue we had was water,” says Sewall. Powered but waterless for almost 2 1/2 days, the paper had to bring in portable toilets. And with no restaurants open, he adds, “feeding people was an issue.” Someone was sent out to buy cookout foods and supplies, and all were fed. But a press gets thirsty and “it was just luck” that process water was supplied, he adds. When retired maintenance staffer Wayne Moritz returned to the Daily News a few months before Sewall moved south, he recalled an old well on site and took it upon himself to restore it and rebuild the pump.



The Naples Daily News' Wifag evolution 371 will feature two jaw folders with balloon formers, variable web-width capability, and image-based, closed-loop controls for cutoff and color register.

“That was one of the best times to be in the newspaper business,” Sewall says. When power is out and TV cables are down for days, people need reliable information, he continues. “It’s probably the most important time to have print out there.”

But while it has seemed for years “like we were pretty much immune to direct hits,” Cote says, with Hurricane Donna in 1960 “we had salt-water intrusion 40 miles inland.” At the downtown site, he adds, “if we do get a Donna-type hurricane, there’s no doubt that we’ll be flooded.”

From winds exceeding 150 mph, Donna’s damage caused something else: new zoning, a stricter building code, and the building boom that changed Collier County.

Even more stringent codes came with

state control. Requiring its own licensing, continuing education and testing, Florida goes beyond the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards’ reciprocity among states, focusing on storms, sand, mid saltwater construction.

### Weatherproofing the ‘News’

Scripps’ Treasure Coast experience is part of the reason the design-build approach was not chosen, according to DiMare, who says having different enterprises responsible for the two big parts of a project creates checks and balances that turn up potential problems before a project is completed.

That’s important, says DiMare, because “a little thing can sink a big ship.” So in thinking about storm resistance, “it’s not as simple as wind speed,” Hogan adds. “Pressure and uplift vary with different portions of a building,” he explains, depending on location and on building size and shape. If a building is breached,

DiMare adds, “a wall designed to be hit from the outside gets hit from the inside and blows out.”

Structural failure can start with a small section peeling off and letting in wind — an event traceable to shortcomings in materials, design, or fastener type — one of those little things. A falling tile or flying stick

breaking a window can start the process, DiMare says.

So a storm-resistant roof typically is a denser material held in place by stronger, more frequent fasteners. “It’s so critical that your skin and your fasteners be tight,” DiMare says. And the glazing, he continues, must be able to stop “a 2-by-4 at 200 miles per hour from breaking the window.” Roll-down or other shutters or storm shingles can be configured for easy set-up. As for a window itself, Dario Designs Project Architect Ron Ashton describes a passive system of “impact-resistant laminated glazing to meet small- and large- missile requirements”: thick, multilayer panes consisting of tempered glass on both sides and a proprietary plastic layer within “that’s taking much of the impact.” Some glass will break, but a projectile will not create an opening. The



area's wind-speed-resistance requirement is 130 mph.

"We've got a building-envelope expert who designing all the flashings," says Hogan, noting also that Scripps has its own specialists reviewing the project. "We're going to require the contractor to perform rigorous pre-installation testing," he says, adding that tests will be done on site because real-world results are superior to anything else in understanding how performance translates from paper plans to real materials in real weather. A variety of possible solutions will be tried, as needed.

Essentially, Scripps had to choose protection against either a 100-year storm or a - 500-year storm. "That has been a topic of discussion all the way through" from the start of the planning process, says Sewall. The choice that made business sense was "somewhere between" the two, he says, designing "as stringently as possible" while remaining affordable. The plan exceeds storm and water code requirements, according to Scripps exec Wolfe. "We have hired the services of water-intrusion specialists" he says.

Surrounded by five golf and country clubs and a hospital, the Daily News' new site sits about a mile from the Gulf of Mexico. But elevation matters more than distance from the sea. Whether 500 or 5,000 feet from shore, the exposure is the same where the elevation is the same, says Hogan. So at no small cost, fill will be trucked in to raise the site three feet. The building itself will sit another four feet off the ground. And because roadbeds are raised wherever road work is performed in the area, access is similarly protected.

Beyond flooding, other points of failure to be addressed include water to print and power for equipment and lights. Fortunately, the land has old agricultural wells "that we are hooking up to," Hogan says. As for power, an on-site generator will run critical services such as HVAC and editorial (including Internet) operations. The capability of connecting to a leased drive-up generator will keep some four or five printing towers and one folder running, according to Sewall. For a yearly fee, Wolfe explains, the paper is put on a priority list. If a generator is needed, it arrives "well before a storm" and the paper pays a daily use fee. Supplied power also will be "conditioned" to prevent spikes and surges from crippling the electronics upon which so much production equipment relies. A flywheel generator will help keep electrical power clean and continuous. In its simplest

configuration, the device comprises a motor that consumes little power to spin a large and heavy or light and fast wheel. It stores enough rotational energy to continue spinning if electrical service fails, in which case the momentum spins the motor, allowing it to briefly function as a generator until service is restored or backup power is brought on line — supplying current with virtually no delay after a failure.

Rather than store fuel on site, the paper has arranged for delivery by suppliers in other states, according to Wolfe. Newsprint, he says, is supplied by mills that are only a day's drive away in Georgia and Tennessee.

To these provisions can be added a printing agreement with Scripps' Treasure Coast for which Naples printed during the hurricanes of 2004.

### Getting it right, inside and out

Apart from personnel and plant security, the function, look, and landscaping tie into the project's purpose and its environment. "We're going to use sandy-colored concrete blocks in a drifting pattern to break down the massing of the large production buildings," Hogan says.

But he also speaks of "little things that reveal themselves over time": a rain-fed waterfall splashing past the publisher's balcony with water draining down sides of the building. The grounds will be terraced to accept the trickle from downspouts and walls that will support tropical plantings. The site's north side will be shady, lush, and well-watered to encourage growth of moss, says Hogan, adding, "The character of the southern facade is markedly different because of its solar orientation." Not as obvious will be the sundial created by lampposts serving as gnomons, casting shadows against the parking lot's markings.

Hogan insists that instead of tying into the environment, architecture often merely is a "designer's style and whim." In contrast, "we took something we had to do and made it into an attribute," he says, citing terracing of the extra elevation, controlling rainwater run-off, and providing lighted parking. Smart, attractive execution of required design elements is, he says, "the difference between architecture and a building."

Inside the office building, the biggest change will be its multimedia newsroom. A leader in exploiting new electronic media, the Daily News will have broadcast and video-editing studios, but development of its multimedia center will continue "as we're designing the building" and will not

stop after it's built, says Hogan.

"We worked hard to push all the hardwall areas to the back," he says, creating open space for the center's future reinvention and to provide as much sunlight as possible.

The design, says Wolfe, "kind of looks like the bridge of the starship Enterprise."

At this point, construction documents provide for the multimedia center infrastructure, but an integrator had not been selected as of early October.

"We're moving all our existing front-end systems" to the new offices, says Sewall. But in the plant, a six-tower, two-folder Wifag evolution 371 press with variable web-width capability and image-based, closed-loop cutoff and color-register controls will print the approximately 47,000-circulation (68,000 in winter) daily, 20-plus niche products, and perhaps contract work. "Treasure Coast and a local printer now produce as many as a quarter of the company's specialty publications. We'll be bringing those back in house," Sewall adds. Negotiations for packaging and palletizing systems were being finalized last month.

The paper's Goss Metro is in good shape, but its 23 9/16-inch cutoff may well prevent its resale, says Cote. Scripps' Corpus Christi (Texas) Caller Times may get the Goss digital page packs from the 12 process-color couples. "They save a lot of ink, and they've been trouble-free" he says, comparing them with the maintenance and repairs required by the "tremendous amount of moving parts in the original equipment."

Initial press training (possibly on Wifag presses in New Jersey or New York), has yet to be scheduled, though it is budgeted for late next year, Cote says.

Expecting difficulty in absorbing everything about the new technologies during a transition to a new operation and location, Sewall says he looks not just to initial training, but also retraining six months to a year later — a chance for the crew to "ask the questions they could not get resolved" earlier.

Without that, a return on the \$90 million investment is compromised. Sewall calls training "one of the most important things in moving to new technology. It's at the top of my list." ■