

New plant ends 3-year journey for News-Post

Md. newspaper first in the country to use 3-by-2 singlewide press by TKS to fuel operations.

By Mary L. Van Meter
Publisher

FREDERICK, Md. — The Frederick News-Post on April 1 opened its \$44 million, 120,000-square-foot production facility; capping off a three-year project that is transforming the 125-year-old family owned paper.



Clay

Myron Randall, editor and publisher of The News-Post, said the greenfield facility will fuel new capacity and flexibility in the paper's operation. The plant, designed by Dario Designs Inc., reflects the historical legacy of Frederick, which served as a major crossroads during the Civil War.

"We have incorporated a historical feel and our presses are painted blue and gray," he said.

A ColorTop 4000 3-by-2 press from TKS (USA), which is configured as two lines, anchors the plant. It sports six four-over-four towers, nine Megtec heavy-duty reels and a 2:3:3 jaw folder positioned at a right angle.

It's the first North American 3-by-2 press to be installed by TKS, which introduced the format in 2004. The singlewide machine has a capacity of 70,000 copies per hour and features a 21-inch cutoff.

"We are very excited about this start-up," said Nobuyuki Nakajima, president and chief executive officer of TKS. "The singlewide market is very important to TKS and we look forward to having a showplace like Frederick. The News-Post made a very big commitment to the community and we are honored to be part of that."

On the prepress side, The News-Post installed two alfaQuest computer-to-plate machines, with Fusion Systems International page flow and imposition software.

"We now have the capability of running either two or three tab pages side-by-side," said Bob Clay, director of operations.

Commercial Key

In order to attract commercial work — a key component of the new infrastructure — The News-Post equipped pressline A with an online stitcher, Gammerler trimmer and stacker, Clay said. The press also has a technotrans spraybar system and a blanket washing system from Baldwin Technology Co. Inc.

"We can run various sizes of commercial product," he said.

William Randall, who oversees FMP Printing and Publishing, the family's commercial publishing arm, said the new facility



Above, a News-Post sign from the 1950s was reattached to the paper's new facility in a symbolic linking between old and new. Right, the TKS ColorTop 4000 press was equipped with an elevator to transport heavy loads up on the second level; the press' design affords the paper great flexibility in web management.



will improve communication and boot productivity. "Everyone benefits and works together now with a better understanding of the full operation." The B-side of the press, meantime, is dedicated to The News-Post and sports three high formers that can run variable sizes in either collect or straight mode, Clay said. "We can run 54 pages broadsheet full color or 108 tab pages, in straight mode, in full color."

Britton Services Inc. provided the mechanical, electrical and pipefitting work needed to install the press.

The News-Post tapped ASTI to install a manual roll systems that's designed into the surface of the floor.

To accommodate future growth DDI engineered the press hall with a concrete table that extends just beyond the current press. TKS set the reels on the same floor as the folders, which allowed The News-Post to limit the height of the building.

Postpress was bolstered with the addition of a Muller Martini Mailroom Systems Inc. SLS-3000 inserter, equipped with SAM inserter software. The paper also purchased an Accrply Inc. inkjet system to permit it to print information directly off the inserter. Cannon Equipment provided cart-loading equipment.

The new mailroom is enabling The News-Post to strike distribution agreements with other publishers, including The Wall Street Journal, Washington Times and Herald-Mail in Hagerstown, Md., said Philip Ferrara, circulation director.

Next up for The News-Post: a redesign of the paper, expected in May. ■