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Times Union shopping for new press, postpress equipment

TO MODERNIZE ITS production equipment and increase revenue opportunities, the Times Union in Albany, NY., plans to purchase new press and post-press equipment within the next six months and expand its printing plant in Colonie, N.Y., by 70,000 square feet. The entire project should be finished in 2 1/2 years, Publisher Mark E. Aldam says.

"The expansion is to accommodate the new press configuration and inline equipment," Aldam says. Additional space is needed to store preprints, he adds. Dario Designs is designing the expansion.

The Times Union currently uses two Goss Headliners installed in the 1970s, says Michael Mace, production manager. The mailroom equipment is from the late '70s and early '80s and includes two Heidelberg 2299 inserters, Quipp stackers, cart loaders by Cannon Equipment Co. Inc. and a Setup and Monitoring integration system by Muller Martini Mailroom Systems Inc.

Although the newspaper has not chosen its new press and post-press manufacturers, Aldam says he has certain expectations about the new equipment. "We're looking for a press that can print 64 straight pages with color on every page," he says. The newspaper now has much more modest capability, printing only one-third of the pages in color on a straight press run. With the new press, the paper plans to reduce its cutoff and web width, Aldam says. "We'll go down to a cutoff of 21 inches with a 46-inch web width," he says. "Right now, we're at 22 3/4 inches with a 50-inch web width."

Aldam says he wants post-press equipment that is faster, more efficient, requires minimal handling and has more sophisticated zoning capability for sub-ZIP code mail products. "Our advertisers are asking for us to get down to the ZIP+four household level," he says.

The Times Union also plans to install computer-to-plate technology "though it's not mission critical right now," Aldam says. In addition to improving the paper, the new equipment should increase the paper's commercial printing capability, Aldam says. The Times Union fully expects to attract more printing work from daily and weekly publications and other periodicals in the Albany metro area, he says.