

# For Great West, new press journey, not sprint

BY CHUCK MOOZAKIS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



GWN CEO Duff Jamison, with Plant Manager Evan Jamison, at the publisher's plant, now under construction.

Photo: GWN

The hybrid press that Great West Newspapers will put into operation next spring will be among the most technologically sophisticated the newspaper industry has ever seen.

Cloaked with automation and featuring ancillary systems managed through a single conduit, the specially engineered 66-inch wide, 21-inch cutoff UV-equipped Koenig & Bauer AG Colora press supports single, double and triplewide production on a single platform.

"We're a great believer in the

effectiveness of print," said Duff Jamison, GWN's president and CEO. "We see that in our newspapers. And we have great faith that print has a future. But you have to be damn efficient at it."

St. Albert, Alberta, Canada-based GWN prints 21 newspapers, a mix of weekly and twice-weekly products with a total weekly circulation in excess of 250,000. It also produces a wide variety of commercial work and next year, following installation of the Colora, will begin printing the 100,000-subscriber Ed-

monton Journal under terms of a contract with Postmedia Network Inc.

That wide mix of products, in combination with GWN's mandate to grow its commercial work, meant the company needed a press foundation robust enough to satisfy its requirements.

To that end, the Colora will be comprised of three towers, three pasters and a customized KF5 folder capable of producing multiple formats via a fully adjustable single-level triple former assembly.

One of the towers will be equipped with Prime UV's recently introduced Radmax curing technology, which will permit the production of up to 48 UV pages per run. The tower will have a dual stainless steel inking system that permits it to be used for both coldset and UV production.

"With installation of the Prime UV system, we can print full-color newspapers and magazines on gloss stocks," Jamison said.

The control software, from EAE, will manage auxiliary press systems from technotrans, Q.I. Press Controls, Baldwin Technology Co. Inc. and others through a specially written human-machine interface, or HMI. The platform will be able to produce more than 950 different products, all of them preprogrammed into the system to reduce the need for manual intervention.

"Everything is designed around the press," said consultant Sam Wagner. Wagner, president of Sarasota, Fla.-based Web Offset Services, advised GWN on the project.

"The project was built with an eye on keeping it economical but making it as advanced and sophisticated as possible. At the same time, we didn't want it to be overly complex for the operators," he said.

## End of journey

The press and new facility represent the end of a course that began five years ago, when Jamison said he read a *News & Tech* article profiling Independent Newspapers Inc. in Dover, Del.

INI had just put its own customized KBA Colora press into operation, using many of the same technologies underpinning GWN's machine.



Consultant Sam Wagner.

Photo: WWS

After contacting Wagner, who had also advised INI, Jamison said the two outlined plans for a press that would require less manual intervention but flexible enough to support GWN's operations.

"The Alberta economy was running strong at the time, and we were finding it very difficult to find people, so we wanted to find a solution" that would allow GWN to deploy more automation and more modern technology, Jamison said. At the same time, Jamison decided to construct a new building to house GWN's production operations on land near the company's headquarters. "We had determined way back that we were going to leave our current facility and do something new, but we thought we would use our existing (singlewide) press and carry on," Jamison said.

Jamison said he explored numerous concepts over the next several years, including press configurations that would be required as part of GWN's bid — ultimately won by Transcontinental — to print The (Toronto) Globe and Mail.

By early 2011, however, the search neared an end: Jamison

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Photo: GWN



GWN's new production plant in Alberta, Canada.

was about to sign a contract for a smaller machine when the opportunity surfaced to print the Journal, a job that required a press big enough to print a six-section, 72-page broadsheet.

"Once that happened, we decided to expand the building, and we put together an RFP that incorporated these new requirements," Jamison said. "Now we needed a larger, highly automated press that was flexible and required less intervention."

Another requirement: the press had to fit into GWN's building, which meant it had to be all on one level and not use any configurations typical for such production.

"We had lots of special requirements," Wagner said. "It had to be either a doublewide or triplewide, but still flexible enough for singlewide newspapers. It

had to have a single-level former assembly that would fit within the low roofline of the new press hall, but three formers across to meet sectioning requirements."

The automatically adjustable

former assembly permits the former boards to move laterally across the press as needed with no mechanical intervention.

### Automation key

The real key, though, was automating as much as possible the steps needed to produce GWN's various products since it has more than a dozen makereadies each day, Wagner said.

"The only way to get to what is labeled 'one touch' is to put everything you can into one box and that is the goal we began with in Dover and further improved in Denmark" where Wagner consulted with Copenhagen-based Dansk AvisTryk to commission its highly automated press.

To reach that goal, GWN huddled with press auxiliary vendors and EAE to develop a new, and

deeper, interface that permitted all of their platforms — from spray dampening to color registration — to funnel through EAE's control system.

EAE will also manage CTP — a Southern Lithoplate CTP Alliance platform consisting of two ECRM Newsmax 220 platesetters, SLP's violet plates and Glunz & Jensen processors — as well as providing a prepress workflow that will interface directly with the press control system.

That link — the first system of its kind, Wagner said — will enable GWN to take full advantage of both press presetting and the preprogrammed production catalog. Rounding out prepress is a Nela automated vision punch bending and plate sortation system.

Postpress equipment, a combination of Muller Martini and Schur Packaging Systems components, is being installed in a project overseen by Muller Martini.

"We designed an extremely deep and sophisticated system that, with a single preset, will adjust all of the pertinent settings required of the job at the same time," Wagner said. "It eliminates the need for an operator to perform multiple tasks on a number of different interfaces, making set-up and operation more simple and straightforward. This will reduce

makeready costs and waste and increase operating efficiency."

To further enhance efficiency, Wagner engineered a workflow that centers on three basic product sizes — 27, 35 and 41 millimeters (approximately 11, 13.5 and 16 inches) that encompass all the products GWN will be producing.

Roll sizing was optimized so that GWN will only need to stock 11 basic roll sizes for the more than 950 products it will produce.

"We didn't want to have a stadium-sized warehouse, so we were careful to minimize roll categories," Wagner said.

"Of course, we also made the system open-ended so any size product from 5 inches to 16.5 inches is possible if the requirement is there."

To Jamison, the press represents the best of what GWN will now be able to offer to its advertisers and readers.

Both the Journal and ourselves have seen the demand for color exceed our capacity to supply it," he said. "Now we will be able to accommodate as much as our reps can sell. On top of that, UV inks will open a raft of new opportunities. Add in the productivity enhancements available through automation and we'll enjoy a competitive advantage for many years." ▲

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