

Printing plant ready for opening

Paul Monies • Published: October 29, 2003 12:00 AM CDT • Updated: October 29, 2003 12:00 AM CDT

It's been three years in the making, and faced hurdles such as a slow economy and the tragic death of the company's founder, but Quad/Graphics finally has begun operations at its Oklahoma City printing plant.

The \$60-million plant, at Interstate 240 and Sunnyside Road in southeast Oklahoma City, has hired about 100 workers and will begin printing editions of Newsweek magazine when officials start the presses at an opening celebration today.

Gov. Brad Henry will join Quad/Graphics and Newsweek executives at the 11 a.m. ceremony. Tom Quadracci, Quad/Graphics' president and chief executive, also is expected to announce expansion plans for the plant, the company said.

"We will be expanding rapidly in the next year and adding jobs," said Claire Ho, Quad/Graphics spokeswoman. "Long-term, our goal is to make this a 'megaplant,' which could be as large as 2 million square feet and have a thousand or more employees."

Ho said Quad/Graphics' expansion plans in Oklahoma City could mirror that of its Martinsburg, W. Va., plant, which went from a small nucleus of employees in 1997 to more than 1,000 today.

Wisconsin-based Quad/Graphics unveiled its plans to build an Oklahoma City plant in December 2000, but scaled down the facility and delayed construction as the economic downturn took its toll on the printing business and its clients. The company's founder, Harry Quadracci, drowned in July 2002 while swimming in a Wisconsin lake.

Despite those setbacks, the company remained committed to the Oklahoma City plant, Ho said. Quad/Graphics said it would accelerate plant expansion because the economy appeared to be rebounding.


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"We were taking a pragmatic approach to our expansion," Ho said. "We always knew we wanted to come to Oklahoma City, and it's finally coming to realization. We're excited to be there because it's an ideal location for us to expand."

Initially, the plant has two offset commercial printing presses and three saddle-stitching machines, as well as prepress and distribution services. The company will add two gravure presses, which allow press runs in the millions, by summer 2004.


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"Of course, we're delighted that Quad/Graphics is here," said Richard Burpee, president of the Greater Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce. "This is the kind of printing and manufacturing business we've wanted in our city for a long time. They delayed their start-up by one year when the economy slowed down, but they always knew they were going to start-up and do what they said they'd do."

Oklahoma City, which beat out cities such as Dallas and Phoenix for the plant, teamed up with Forward Oklahoma City Inc., the chamber's economic development arm, to pay \$2.6 million for Quad/Graphics' 168-acre tract in southeast Oklahoma City.

The company also participates in the state's Quality Jobs program, which provides quarterly rebates of up to five percent of payroll in exchange for creating jobs.

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