

Neff Press takes \$1 million facility expansion vertical

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Neff Press Inc., a manufacturer of hydraulic presses, is spending about \$1 million to add 6.5 stories on top of an existing building at its facility in St. Louis.

President John Murphy said the expansion project will add about 65 feet of vertical space and allow the company to install two 30-ton bridge cranes to bolster Neff's product line and sales. Construction began in July and is expected to be completed by the end of November.

"This expansion will enable us to build multiple large machines, three or four at a time," he said. "These presses can cost between \$500,000 and \$3 million."

In addition to a credit line through Commerce Bank, the majority of the expansion is self-funded, Murphy said.

Neff, which had revenue of \$10 million in 2011, is a family-owned business and began in 1965. As a result of the expansion, Murphy expects revenue to grow to almost \$12 million in 2012.

"Revenue has grown by 10-20 percent in the last three years," he said.

But the facility isn't the only thing growing at Neff. Murphy said the company will add to its current workforce of 25 employees next year, including engineers and skilled craftsmen because of expanded operations. The company's primary markets include the automotive, aerospace, defense, appliances, railroad, alternative fuel and earth-moving equipment industries. Emerson and Federal Mogul are local clients of Neff.

Neff's growth is mirroring other Midwest manufacturing trends, according to Chad Moutray, chief economist with the National Association of Manufacturers.

"When you look at the Midwest, you are seeing a lot of movement with the auto and machinery industries," Moutray said. "Manufacturing is picking up here for demand overseas."

Manufacturing construction is increasing due to that increased demand, Moutray said,



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Neff Press Inc. President John Murphy expects the expansion to help grow revenue to almost \$12 million in 2012.

up 17 percent this year over 2011.

At the construction site, Paric, the general contractor on the project, is reorganizing the project's schedule in order to not disrupt Neff's ongoing manufacturing work.

"The facility is still operating at 100 percent capacity," Paric Project Manager Chris Leonard said. "We have had to do some things out of sequence that we normally wouldn't have and we have put up a lot of temporary protection and shoring... it's a matter of trying to coordinate time frames."

Once construction is complete, Leonard and his team will tear down the facility's existing ceiling in the building to open the expanded space. In addition, Paric is replacing Neff's current floor slab to allow the installation of heavier equipment that would have otherwise cracked the previous slab.

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