

Published Thursday  
March 16, 2006

## Company to make a 'statement' at site

BY DEBORAH SHANAHAN

---

WORLD-HERALD STAFF WRITER

For health care providers in sunny Arizona, it's not cost-effective to staff year-round at the levels needed for the four or five months when the population booms with people seeking refuge from winter.



C&A Industries officials worked with two architectural firms and their contractor to design a new headquarters that is distinctive and allows room for growth. This view shows how the building planned at 136th and California Streets will appear to people looking northwest while traveling west on West Dodge Road.

So they call on an Omaha-based company to provide nurses, radiologists and other professionals who work on a contract basis.

The specialized staffing and recruiting firms that make up C&A Industries Inc. have grown to 3,000 employees nationally and more than 350 locally, or almost five times the number of five or six years ago. Now the company is planning a new headquarters.

A groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled today at the 136th and California Streets site for the new building, which has been designed to ensure it's noticed by West Dodge Road traffic.

"We wanted to make a little bit of a statement," Larry Courtnage said of the five-story, 100,000-square-foot structure. He shares chief executive duties with his wife, Kathy Wolf Courtnage.

"The prime location will give us added exposure as we look toward dramatically increasing our employee base," Larry Courtnage said. The company plans to add more than 100 in-house employees to its Omaha operation during 2006.

Combining brick, glass and metal as well as vertical and curved features, the building was designed by architecture firm Gensler's Denver office working with Holland Basham Architects locally. Gensler's portfolio includes other Omaha headquarters, including Union Pacific's downtown high-rise and the Gallup Organization's riverfront campus.

C&A Industries, which was founded by Larry Courtnage more than 35 years ago, conducts business in all 50 states and, according to the most recent Staffing Industry Report, is the 70th-largest staffing firm in the country. With about 45 percent of C&A's employees in the Aureus Medical Group, it is ranked among the nation's top 10 health care staffing agencies.



Courtnage said the company's growth has been driven primarily by the rapid growth in the health care industry. Because of a shortage of health care professionals, providers have turned to staffing firms to recruit nationally for certain positions and to fill gaps for such reasons as a maternity leave.

Architects combined glass, brick, curves and vertical features for the 100,000-square-foot building that will go up at the Bank of the West office park. This perspective is looking northeast from West Dodge Road.

Courtnage emphasized that employees of the C&A firms are well-paid professionals with good benefits who work on contracts of three months or more, not "temps" who work a day here and a day there.

"Some of these people have been with us for years," he said.

Scot Thompson, the company's chief operating officer, said professionals will seek contract work because they want to travel, to try different work environments or to beef up their résumés with experience at a series of prominent facilities.

"They can go to Hawaii for three or six months, if they like," Thompson said. "It allows them the flexibility to work when and where they like."



Courtnage said the company considered other cities for the new headquarters. Phoenix, in particular, encouraged the company to locate there.

But he said the company liked the quality of life and quality of employees it has enjoyed in Omaha.

"It's been our home base forever," he said.

The new building will enable the company to consolidate its Omaha offices. Celebrity Staffing will shift operations from locations at 171st Street and West Center Road and at 130th Street and West Center

Road. Corporate executives and staff, Aureus Group, AurStaff and the radiology division of Aureus Medical Group will move from 118th and Q Streets.

Click to enlarge

The Aureus Medical Group's nursing division will remain at Aureus Medical Plaza, the company's Lakeside location along West Center Road.

C&A officials partnered with the two architectural firms and the general contractor, the Weitz Co., to design the building.

Designer Blake Mourer and project principal Phil McCurdy, both with Gensler's Denver office, said that process included making "mini-movies" that showed how the building would look from different vantage points as traffic moved along West Dodge Road.

Mourer said the resulting design combined the company's desire for glass and curves with the traditional brick and rectangular buildings already found in the office park. To ensure that the building stands out from its neighbors, it has vertical elements.

Among other features, the building will have a lobby with a two-story atrium; some underground parking; floor-to-ceiling windows and a balcony overlooking Girls and Boys Town on the fifth-floor.