

West Valley View

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The big - really, really big - picture

FastSigns opens Goodyear production facility with 5-ton digital printer

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assistant editor

Next month, one Goodyear business is going to produce a sign large enough to wrap around a building.

In fact, that is exactly what the banner is going to do once it's shipped to a California business, said Jerry Hoyler, owner of the Goodyear FastSigns at 1120 N. Estrella Parkway, Suite C104.

To produce such a sign, Hoyler opened a FastSigns production facility on Aug. 13 at 2710 S. Litchfield Road in Goodyear.

Before he was able to open the 5,000-square-foot facility, he had to transport a 10,000-pound, 26-foot-long digital printer.

The four-hour process was done with the help of Tolleson-based Precision Heavy Hauling. The printer was moved from FastSigns in Glendale, owned by Debra Campbell, Hoyler's mother, to its new Goodyear home.

"It's the West Valley's only super grand format [printer]," Hoyler said. Only four other printers in the Valley have the same capabilities, and those are either in central Phoenix or the East Valley, he said.

"At the Glendale store it was very limited; it didn't have a lot of room or space to be utilized," Hoyler said.

Not so anymore, as the Goodyear production facility has plenty of room to roll out all the banners to work on them after the printing process is done.



FAST SIGNS OWNER Jerry Hoyler loads his massive HP sign printer Aug. 13 in Goodyear. The printer can print signs in full color as large as 20 feet wide. Those pieces can then be welded, or bonded, together to create even larger signs.

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Meet the Scitex XL 1500

FastSigns purchased the used Hewlett-Packard Scitex XL 1500 printer in 2007 for \$155,000, he said.

"The machine has been out for 15 years and to this date has not been decommissioned," Hoyler said.

The roll-to-roll printer has the ability to print 1,300 square feet an hour at a maximum scale of 16-feet, 4-inches wide and 300-feet long. It can print a 4-by-8 banner in 1½ minutes, he said.

"Someone can call in at noon and say they need a 12-by-50 banner by the end of the day," Hoyler said. "By 5 p.m. they can come pick it up.

"Most sign companies have machinery that produces 100 square feet an hour," he said. "For every one that type of machine produces, my Scitex can do seven in the same quality."

For the California job, Hoyler will print two 16-by-300 banners and then "weld" them together using a "robot," a mini machine that moves on its own while it heats and seals the two banners together.

"It will physically wrap a building in California," he said.

Another impressive aspect of the giant printer is the fact banners roll off of it already dry to the touch thanks to heaters that run the length of the machine.

Plus, it can be slowed down to 200 square feet an hour, allowing it to print the smallest text imaginable, Hoyler said.

Cost to print something on the HP Scitex XL 1500 is about \$4 a square foot, Hoyler said.

However, "the square-foot price is literally cut in half for super grand banners," such as the one going to California to wrap a building.

Those who would like to see such a printer in action can do so.

"Our shops are always open to people to come down and look at what we're doing," Hoyler said.

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