

Building Dental Depot

Launching a new dental office has never been a small task, but over the years a number of factors have contributed to the increasing complexity of opening each new office. Despite the 20 offices in the Dental Depot lineup, each new building comes with its own unique set of challenges.

The process involves a lot of moving parts and an army of well trained and dedicated specialists to bring everything together. From the design to the install, everything is a major collaboration, said Nick Richardson, special projects coordinator and woodcraftsman for Dental Depot.



The facilities team puts the final touches on the 20th Dental Depot train outside the new Central Tulsa office, March 2018.

The manufacturing and installation arm of Dental Depot's facilities team is made up of Nick Richardson, who handles the woodworking, John

Argo, who takes on the welding projects, Tommy Tison who paints everything, and Keith and Kane Proffitt, who assist with welding and a variety of other projects.

From start to finish, the facilities team designs, builds and installs everything from the bridges and brackets that hold up the electrified overhead train tracks, down to the signage and custom furniture.

The team also creates and installs the iconic trains that sit in front of each office. From start to finish, the

outdoor trains and their accompanying coal cars take about 700 hours to make.

The most senior member of the team, Nick, has been with Dental Depot since the mid-1980s. He started out

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John Argo shows Nick's patterns that are a template for creating the overhead track bridges.

Once the building is built, painted and floored, the install begins. Even for Dental Depot's seasoned facilities team, the install usually takes about two weeks.

working as a handyman, managing the maintenance and yard work for Dr. Glenn's rental properties.

Then in 2001, with the construction of the South OKC office and the fire that destroyed the original Central OKC office, his skills grew more instrumental in the development and

installation of the new Dental Depot buildings.

In the beginning, Nick would work with the architects to figure out where things were going to be, but these days he is given the blue prints after the

compliance, staff activities such as phone calls, doctor's offices and lunch room privacy, Nick explained.

"We use Plexiglas tubes for the trains that go through the bathrooms so kids don't derail the trains," Argo chimed in. "But don't go giving the kids any ideas!"

"We've built a lot of stuff over the years," Nick said. "I build the Dental Depot signs [that go in the lobbies]. Those started because I made one for [Dr.] Glenn for his birthday. We liked them, so we kept making them."

"If it's metal, he can build it," Nick said, gesturing toward Argo. "And if it's wood, I can."

Everybody has their favorite part of the build. For Nick, it's a toss-up between the Hell Gate Bridge and the location signs. For Argo, it's making the bridges for the overhead train tracks.

"We've done some pretty neat bridges," Argo said.

"Nick will draw the pattern and I'll build the bridge off of it."

The facilities team also makes exterior features, including signal arms, baggage carts and weather vanes.

“ It takes a lot of coordination to build and install everything,” Argo continued. “Even though you plan the heck out of it, you just never know. ”

building process has already begun. Once he has the blue prints, he drafts where the overhead train tracks and bridges will go.

Sometimes the plan works. Sometimes it doesn't – at least, not on the first try. After all, there are a number of things to take into consideration, such as the need for soundproofing certain areas for HIPAA



The team carefully prepares a weather vane for installation.

Creating the weathervanes is especially challenging. The team cuts out the direction letters by hand and each weathervane requires three layers of steel pipe to mount them on the rooftop. The real challenge though, is making sure the piece is perfectly balanced.

"Everything has to be level, measured and squared," Argo explained. "Then you gotta get the thing bolted to the roof. It's just got to be balanced. Period."

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This Dental Depot train is almost ready to be painted.

The *New Look* of Dental Depot

The new Central Tulsa office will be the first to feature the company's updated interior design, by Les Henderson.

Les began decorating for Dental Depot in 2001 when he worked on the design for the South OKC office. He got involved with the company through Dr. Glenn's wife Arlene Ashmore, who used to shop in an antique store he once owned.

About a year ago, when the Central Tulsa office was still in the planning stage, the Ashmores sat down with Les to discuss their desire to redefine the Dental Depot look.

"We started to kind of transition into a bit of a



Les at his OKC studio, showing the new Dental Depot color scheme.

by what his clients want, he prefers to think of himself as a guide for their vision.

"I try to give my clients exactly what they want, but at an elevated level," Les explained. "People [often] know what they want, but I think achieving that is tough for people.

The Ashmores knew what they wanted – they knew it 20 years ago, and they knew it this time, too. I just was a conduit that helped them get to that point."

"It's all about comfort ... [the new look] is soothing and homey, but yet it's vibrant, interesting and stimulating," Les said. "It's a total experience

that we want to create to make everybody feel good and at home."

"[The Dental Depot look] kind of takes you somewhere else, too. And it always has," Les continued. That much won't change.

The current Dental Depot décor uses muted tones and features period artwork to achieve the look of a bygone country train station. On the other hand, the new design

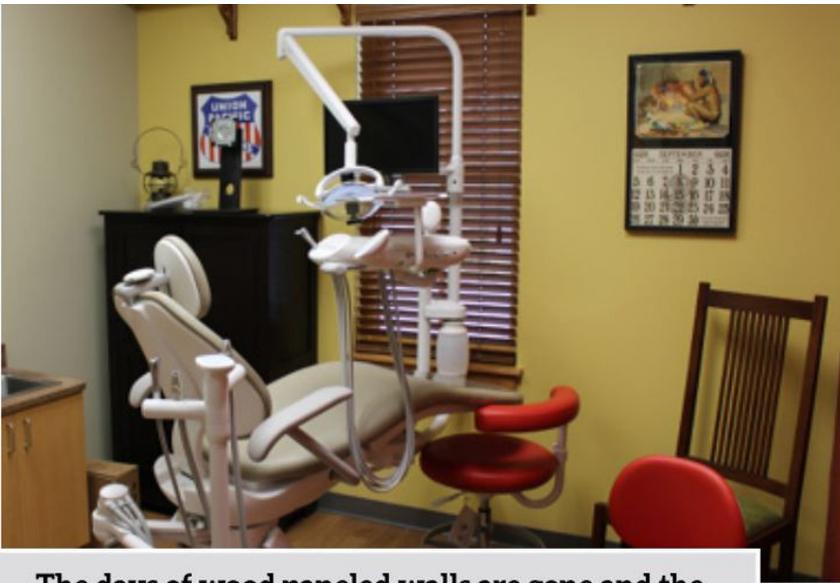
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different look, but into one that still had the flavor of Dental Depot," Les said. "The Ashmores didn't want to get away from that.

Les is not the type of designer to lay down his own law about design. Motivated

New artwork is bright and bold, and is no longer matted.





The days of wood paneled walls are gone and the new color scheme brightens the office's 12 operatories.

features a modern color pallet of Brookside Moss, Gold Leaf and Currant Red.

The paint colors were released by Benjamin Moore about a year ago, and they weren't easy to get. In fact, for the time being at least, these colors are unique to Dental Depot.

"They come in a leather texture and we didn't really want that, we just wanted the color," Les explained. "[Benjamin Moore] probably would produce the non-textured version, but I think at the time it was a little harder to get the color without the texture because it was new."

The new artwork takes a brighter approach with bold graphics that grab people's attention. The result is a bright, airy office that is energetic, yet comfortable and inviting.

"We've been collecting train art since the fire, and everything is scanned onto computer chips so we can blow it up," Nick Richardson

said. "Les works on all of that and I think he did a good job of getting the colors right. They're richer."

"I really like the new artwork because I think it really still says Dental Depot, but just in a very strong, current way," Les said. "It brings that kind of residential feel that makes people comfortable, but it's still elevated. You know, it's almost like going to a museum and getting your teeth cleaned!"

And Les is right. The new look of Dental Depot brings

the company's impressively curated collection of railway art and artifacts to a whole new level.

Beyond the look, there's also the functionality of the office to consider. The new Central Tulsa office is almost entirely paperless. While having a positive impact on the environment was a consideration in 'going green,' the speed and efficiency of digitizing the new office was a big draw, too.

"On the clinical end, going paperless helps expedite the process for doctors to communicate their treatment plans and with their teams," said Ryan Martin, Dental Depot director of IT. "The iPads for check-in cut down on mistakes because it's easier to save digitally than it is physically."

The IT team is still working on a way to digitize yellow-cards, and on developing a check-in website unique to Dental Depot – just a couple of developments to look out for in the future.



The Central Tulsa office's lobby is bright, airy, and inviting.