

## Work pace picks up at spring-training site

by **Carrie Watters** - Jun. 6, 2008 07:53 AM  
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More than 270 workers shovel dirt, pour cement and operate the biggest backhoe that Caterpillar makes at Glendale's spring-training ballpark.

Next week, work will ratchet to two shifts operating around the clock. By August, the number of hard hats should reach 500.

Timing is critical, but the project is going smoothly, Tom Harrison, construction executive for Mortenson Construction, said Wednesday at the site off Camelback Road and 107th Avenue.

In nine months, the Los Angeles Dodgers - and Chicago White Sox, if they get out of a contract in Tucson - intend to open the spring season at the nearly \$100 million ballpark.

Glendale is building the stadium with two-thirds funding from the Arizona Sports and Tourism Authority and cash from the teams to pay for their practice fields.

The concrete walls are poured and going vertical on buildings, each designed with sloping lines that mimic surrounding landscape.

The 15 buildings at the new Glendale spring training ballpark, from concessions to club houses, gain in height much like the peaks of the Estrella Mountains to the south and the White Tanks to the west.

Los Angeles Dodgers owner Frank McCourt and Chicago White Sox owner Jerry Reinsdorf agreed on a stadium with Western appeal.

No man-made backdrop will serve as the batter's eye. Beyond center field, rows of Afghan pine trees, which grow 40 to 50 feet high, will provide a natural batter's eye.

Buildings will be stained a warm mix of browns that resemble a worn leather saddle or a well-oiled old baseball glove.

Each will be accented with stone and rusted-looking metal panels.

"It will be a very classy looking, rustic facility," said Harrison, whose job is to deliver the facility by March 1.

For now, construction crews drive over the dirt that will be the playing ground of Dodgers and Sox sluggers.

One can see glimpses of what is to come over the next nine months. The bowl of the stadium that will seat 10,000 fans is dug and the beginnings of concrete stairs poured.

The seats will be a bronze or dark yellow color.

A 1,400-foot-long lake is dug, roughly bisecting the complex's center. The still-empty lake narrows to resemble a river and will spill over like a waterfall into a larger area that is 25 feet deep. Bridges will span the lake and fishing is expected to be allowed.

Each team will have a walk of fame on either side to honor its legends.

The lake will be filled with reclaimed water from a nearby Glendale water treatment facility and will be used to irrigate the ballfields.

Seven practice fields are being built for each team, the Dodgers to the eastern side of the property and the Sox to the west. Those fields have been graded, with nearby piles of crushed brick ready to be mixed into the field.

As in Vero Beach, Fla., the Dodgers' longtime spring-training home, practice fields will be open to allow fans to interact with players.

The Sox have a different philosophy, and their practice fields are off limits to the public.

The ballpark is not only shared by two teams but two cities.

Glendale owns the land and facility, which falls just across the border in Phoenix.

Harrison said coordinating with two cities adds complexity to the project.

"It's been a massive coordination between the cities," he said.

Phoenix officials, who provide inspections and other support, say the project is going smoothly.

Phoenix gave Glendale a one-year approval on a traffic plan that will bring in fans off Camelback Road onto 111th Avenue, which is under construction