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Valley Ford set to move, Dealership's new location to be ready Sept. 3

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Dave Selland has no cars to sell on the lot of the new Valley Ford at the intersection of Fargo's 32nd Avenue South and Interstate 29.

Dozers were rolling asphalt on the lot's dusty fringe Wednesday. Sept. 3 the lot will be teeming with some 800 new and used Fords.

"This is a great location," Selland said Wednesday afternoon as he led a tour of the 73,000-square-foot Valley Ford sales and service facility nearing construction at 3302 36th Ave. S.

Built by Olaf Anderson & Son Construction, it replaces the Valley Ford at 4001 Main Ave W.

Valley Ford has operated on Main Avenue since 1998. Selland and Fargo businessman Ron Offutt that year each bought one-third of the interests of W.W. Wallwork Ford and renamed it Valley Ford. Bill Wallwork, owner of Wallwork Truck Center, retains a one-third interest in Valley Ford.

W.W. Wallwork had operated the local Ford dealership on Main Avenue since 1969, when it was moved from downtown Fargo.

Cars will roll from the Main Avenue lot a week from now to the Fargodome for a city-wide auto dealers sale.

From there, they'll be driven to the new Valley Ford location.

The new Valley Ford was built on a nine-acre site owned by Offutt. Selland said he expects a bump in sales based on traffic patterns in southwest Fargo.

Situated along I-29 just south of Interstate 94, the new site is accessible not only from the interstates but from Fargo's 32nd, 40th and 52nd avenues south.

Annual sales for the new site are projected at \$60 million.

"Typically, a new building will bring you a 20 percent increase in sales.

That's no guarantee, but we expect an increase," Selland said.

Some features of the new dealership:

- A waste oil/hot water heating system. Waste oil drained during oil changes will flow to two, 10,000-gallon storage tanks underneath the changing bays and be burned by seven "package" boilers. The boilers will heat water that's channeled throughout the dealership's heating system. With three quick-lube

bays, Selland anticipates the dealership will take in 3,000 gallons of waste oil a month, more than enough for heat.

- A one-megawatt, 1,500-horsepower stand-by generator that can be used in power failures or when Cass County Electric Cooperative's electric grid is running at peak demand. Excess power from the generator will be sold back to the cooperative. "It's a pretty good deal for us, a pretty good deal for them," Selland said.

- A \$1 million parts inventory, all packed up and ready to be moved into the new dealership by next Monday. "If you were looking for an alternator for a '62 Ford, I guess we couldn't find it today," Selland said. On Monday, they can.

- A three-level service area. The main bay, with 23 lifts, is for warranty work and major jobs; the priority bay is for fleet and commercial customers; and the immediate-care bay for jobs that can be done in less than an hour.

- A 100,000-square-foot storm water retention pond immediately east of the dealership. It will handle not only runoff from the dealership's lots but be used to store storm water from the neighborhood during heavy rains. "If we have a major rain we can fill that before we start blowing manhole covers," Selland said.

The new dealership will not have a body shop. Rather than replacing Valley Ford Collision Center, Selland and Offutt are moving those employees to ABRA AutoBody, a business they own just north of the new Valley Ford. Selland said the ABRA facility will be expanded to accommodate Valley Ford business as well as business from Selland Motors, a dealership they own in Moorhead.