

Homestead:

Teleport expanding

Fourth satellite now orbiting the earth

By JOANNE KIMBERLIN
Assistant Editor

Deathly cold and infinitely hostile, the dark recesses of outer space are as familiar to the people who power Panamsat as their own cozy neighborhood in Homestead.

The telecommunications company launched its fourth satellite in January.

And while they can't do much to make the extraterrestrial world more hospitable, a revamped headquarters here on earth will go a long way toward making home base more comfortable.

A \$1.2 million expansion is almost complete.

"We need the space," said Luis Raldiris, director of the teleport at 143 N. Flagger Ave. "We have more satellite launches coming up and we need room for all the equipment that goes along with having more satellites."

Homestead architect Robert Barnes designed the sprawling addition to the company's main building. Contractor Richard Mullins is handling the construction. "They've both done a wonderful

job," Raldiris said. "It's absolutely beautiful. We're very pleased." Raldiris isn't exaggerating. The new look at Panamsat is striking indeed.

Barnes calls the architectural style a blend of Mediterranean, Spanish and Florida influences. False keystone covers the outer walls, melting old into new so well it hard to tell where one ends and the other begins. Carved railings create the impression of Old World balconies at the windows.

"I incorporated a vertical element into the design to throw the eye away from the fact that what we really have is two buildings here," Barnes said, referring to a tower that dominates the northeast corner of the building.

The goal was to create a calming, relaxing atmosphere, a contrast to the state-of-the-art equipment and mission of Panamsat. "The design is really a tribute to Mr. Anselmo, the founder of the company," Barnes said. "He was a romantic in a high-tech world."

Rene Anselmo — actor, entrepreneur, businessman extraordinaire — See EXPANSION, 2A



PHOTO BY JOANNE KIMBERLIN

NEW LOOK — Panamsat's \$1.2 million expansion is an eye-catching addition.



PHOTO BY JOANNE KIMBERLIN

A PERFECT BLEND — The false keystone covering the outer walls blends old and new perfectly.

Panamsat addition underway

EXPANSION, from 1A

naire — was the first to break the government monopoly on satellite communications. In 1988, Anselmo established Panamsat in Homestead and put up the majority of the \$85 million necessary to launch the first privately owned international telecommunications satellite.

Before Panamsat, TV networks, businesses, banks and oth-

ers with international communications needs had no choice but to use Intelsat, a 15-satellite, 120-nation co-operative. Intelsat prices were, by comparison, exorbitant.

An hour on the co-op cost close to \$3,000. Panamsat offered the same service for half the price. Today, the company provides communications coverage to

about 98 percent of the globe.

"We handle a lot of radio traffic and transmit for CNN, ESPN and others," Raldiris said. Prime targets are South America and Europe.

Raldiris expects the company to be firmly ensconced in the spacious addition by the middle of March.