

AIS Breaks Ground on Their New Corporate Headquarters

By PAT MALIN

With a name like Assured Information Security Inc. (AIS), you have to live up to your reputation. The company's clients-most of whom work with or for the Department of Defense-require the strictest secrecy when conducting business.

That's understandable when a company is entrusted with cybersecurity and safeguarding computer networks, software and hardware at the highest levels of government.." Most of our work is classified," said Steven Flint, Chief Operating Officer for AIS, explaining that AIS customers "prefer we keep a low profile."

Yet for a brief spell on Sept. 20, AIS escaped from the shadows as CEO and President Charles Green joined with local business leaders and his employees to break ground for what will become an imposing headquarters building for this thriving home-grown company, smack dab in the middle of the Griffiss Business and Technology Park.

"According to *Inc.* magazine, 50 percent of all new companies fail within their first five years," said Green as he was introduced at the



Local businessmen and Assured Information Security Inc. (AIS) employees break ground on what will be AIS's new corporate headquarters located on the corner of Brooks Road and Rt. 825 in the Griffiss Business and Technology Park.

press conference. "For us, 2011 will be our 10th anniversary.

"We didn't have a desire to put up a fancy new building...but this is a reflection of our commitment to the community. We chose to stay close to our roots. We have a strong commitment to the Air Force Research Lab and this region, and we think this is one of the best regions in the country in which to raise a family."

The two-story AIS building will cost approximately \$10.1 million, and will cover 46,305 square-feet on
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Senator Joe Griffo, left, and AIS CEO and President Charles Green at the AIS ground-breaking ceremony on Monday, September 20.

(Photos by Pat Malin)

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7.5 acres on the corner of 153 Brooks Road and Rt. 825. Gaetano Construction of Utica is scheduled to start the project right away and complete it within 12 months.

AIS hopes to move into its new space by December next year and contribute at least 39 new jobs over the next three years. The company already has more than 100 employees. It is rapidly expanding and advertising job openings on signs within Griffiss Park.

This is a dramatic contrast from its current location, with employees occupying offices in four small buildings in the Griffiss Professional Complex off Hill Road, and tucked away on Avery Lane and Maximus Drive.

Mohawk Valley EDGE

President Steven DiMeo announced that New York State Development Corp. has awarded a \$1 million grant to Cardinal Griffiss Realty to support the job-creation project.

Cardinal Griffiss Realty, a subsidiary of the Griffiss Local Development Corporation, owns the property and is funding the construction, and it will in turn rent the building to AIS, the sole tenant at present.

AIS, a privately-owned company founded in Rome by Green in 2001, can keep giving assurances that its jobs are "classified," but it can't keep its success story under its hat forever. It is unquestionably the fastest-growing local company in the history of Griffiss Park, which will mark its own 156th anniversary on Oct. 1.

In an interview following the groundbreaking

ceremony, Green said in the late 1990s he was a college student at SUNY College of Technology (now SUNYIT) when a professor told him about an opportunity to do some work as a government contractor for AFRL.

"I was introduced to Brian Spink (who is still employed at AFRL)," said Green. "I did some work on computer security."

Green later got a job as a computer analyst with a local company called PRC. He stayed with the company for a few years as it was acquired first by Litton PRC and then by Northrup Grumman.

In 2001, he decided to strike out on his own. By 2002, he said he had three employees. Former Syracuse University instructor Leonard Pop-yack came on board that spring to help Green get AIS off the ground. On May 20, 2002, AIS earned its first contract with the Rome lab.

GRIFFISS PROFILE

Name: Charles Green

Age: 39

Birthplace: Smithville, NY (near Sacketts Harbor)

Education: Jefferson County Community College (Watertown); B.S., SUNY College of Technology, 1994.

Career: Computer analyst, PRC Inc; computer analyst, Litton PRC; computer analyst, Northrup Grumman; founder, president and CEO of Assured Information Security, 2001-present.

Office Complex from developer Dr. John Costello. In 2009, AIS acquired office space in the building in the complex formerly occupied by a call center.

Flint estimates that AIS has 16,000 to 17,000 total square feet in four buildings. AIS also set up satellite offices in Portland, OR (two employees at present, and a third expected any day), Dayton, OH (two employees), and in

about."

AIS Inc's potential has long been recognized. It won the Leading EDGE Award in 2006 from Mohawk Valley EDGE (Economic Development Growth Enterprise), which is Oneida County's economic agency in Herkimer and Oneida counties. EDGE's sister agency, the Griffiss Local Development Corporation, is the landlord of Griffiss Park.

Also in 2006, Assured



Charles Green CEO and President of AIS.

The Mohawk Valley Engineers Executive Council tabbed AIS as its Engineering Company of the Year in 2008. The company that is always hiring also won the Ursula Flagg Award for Human Resource

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with the Rome lab.
"About six years ago, I remember Chuck and Glenn Welsh coming to my office," related Rome Mayor Jim Brown. "They were in a building on Floyd Ave. and said they wanted to expand."

Flint said AIS has more than 100 employees at present. Just a week ago, it hired a new employee, one of the eight college students who worked at AIS over the summer.

"We're hiring across the board in computer security, although not in any particular area," said Flint. "Information security is a very hot area and it will stay a hot area because of the adversaries of the U.S. and the need to protect our national interests. We have 10 openings as of today. Our human resources director just started out on a recruiting trip and will be visiting 12 to 15 schools."

After moving from Floyd Ave, AIS found a small space in the Mohawk Valley EDGE building, which was just torn down to make way for AIS's new building. In 2006, AIS moved into a new building in the Griffiss Professional Complex.

"We took one third of it, and then in 2007, we took two-thirds," Flint recalled. AIS obtained additional space in the Griffiss Professional

Dulles Airport (one).

"We expect to see growth in all three offices and we're still looking at other locations," said Flint. "We could have another office in the coming year. Definitely, Rome will remain our headquarters. That's what the new building is all

Information Security won first place in the Central New York Fast Track Top 50 in the small business category, awarded by the Central New York Business Journal. In 2007, INC magazine ranked AIS 299th among the fastest-growing privately held companies in the US.

Excellence in 2008 from the Mohawk Valley Society for Human Resource Management.

AIS has been a hotbed of jobs for students from local and regional colleges, including SUNY-IT, Utica College, Syracuse University and SUNY Binghamton.



From left, Ken Tompkins of Empire State Development Corp. and Oneida County Executive Anthony Picente Jr. flank Charles Green, CEO and President of AIS Inc., and Assemblywoman RoAnn Destito at the groundbreaking ceremony on Sept. 20 for the company's new headquarters at the four corners in Griffiss Park. New York State Development Corp. awarded Cardinal Griffiss Realty a \$1 million grant toward development of the new building providing AIS meets certain job-creation criteria. AIS, the fastest-growing company in Griffiss Park, plans to add 39 new jobs over the next three years.

(Photos by Pat Malin)