

Client: Associated Underground Contractors  
AIS Construction Equipment Corp.

**Comments from Larry L. Behrenwald  
Chairman of the Board  
AIS Construction Equipment Corp.**

**What is the history of the company?**

AIS Construction Equipment Corporation has been a family-owned business since its founding in 1961, but its origins go back to 1934 when my father, Orville Behrenwald, began selling farm equipment. In fact, in 1947 he introduced to Michigan the first hydraulic crawler excavator. Today AIS has six full-service branch locations across Michigan and my son Jim, as AIS President, is the third generation Behrenwald in the business.

**What type of office and maintenance facilities do you have?**

Each of our six full-service branches is staffed and equipped to provide sales, service, parts, rentals, leasing and financing for our customers. In addition to two shifts of professional technicians working in our service facilities, our fleet of 65 field service trucks assures round-the-clock emergency service to minimize expensive downtime for our customers. Besides our main branches, we also operate five field parts and service locations.

Our 75,000 square foot Central Parts Warehouse stocks a \$10 million parts inventory. Over \$100,000 in parts is moved twice daily among our branches, and we make daily deliveries to our five field locations and 15 additional parts drop locations each weekday.

AIS also operates the largest engine division in Michigan. This facility remanufactures engines, hydraulic pumps, hydraulic motors, cylinders, diesel pumps and more, all designed to save money for the contractor.

**In what type of work does your company specialize?**

Each department within AIS provides specialty knowledge in specific areas, whether it's sales, financing or product support. One area of special mention is rentals. AIS launched the state's first pure rent-to-rent company specifically for contractors back in 1962, and it has grown to become Michigan's largest. We rent on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

All items a contractor needs are available at each AIS branch for sale or rental, including not just large construction machinery but smaller equipment and supplies. In one stop, a contractor can pick up everything from pumps, generators, lighted road barricades and rebar cutters to boots, rain gear, gas cans and drill bits. We even supply mobile offices and portable restrooms.

One customer recently told me he'd been going to seven different suppliers to pick up everything he needed, and he's now able to make just one stop -- at AIS. We also provide on-site delivery, and guarantee we'll be there in four hours or delivery is free.

**Do you have any special programs for your employees?**

We invest a great deal of time and money in training, facilities and equipment. We've been a long time recruiting the top ten percent of quality people out there, and we make sure they have the flexibility to do their jobs. We are pleased to be non-union, which means our employees are partners, like an owner, in AIS. Each branch manager is a partner in the results and management of his branch.

Contractors compliment and recommend us. AIS has always had an excellent reputation for parts and service, and our people are the reason for that. We hear that daily from contractors, and I personally hear it three or four times a week. We call it internal teamwork, and it's what makes our "Yes We Can" attitude possible.

**Why is your company unique? How is it different from other suppliers?**

AIS is not a one manufacturer company. We started offering multiple equipment representation back in 1967 because no one manufacturer has the best of everything, the best model of every machine. So we searched worldwide to find the best products, the best models we could. We searched for, and found, manufacturers that represent quality, durability and long-life to help contractors become more profitable. That's a significant statement. The initial cost of a machine is one factor, but you also need to look at the costs of maintenance, service, repairs and downtime to get the true price tag on the equipment you purchase.

Our product support is legendary among our customers because they *know* they can rely on AIS. We pride ourselves on our responsive, can-do attitude. AIS is Michigan's only equipment supplier with a 24-hour parts program. When a contractor registers his machine with AIS, we *guarantee* the parts he needs will be available within 24 hours, and usually much less. This guarantee is effective seven days a week. Other suppliers offer at best a 48-hour program.

The AIS 24-hour parts guarantee is backed up by our statewide 24-hour emergency paging and message center, and by 24-hour field service that keeps our customers up and running, on schedule and responsive to *their own* customers. Contractors don't work nine-to-five jobs and neither do we. We keep you running.

Over 15,000 square feet of our Central Parts Warehouse is devoted to used parts, and these parts can be purchased as they are or remanufactured to OEM specifications. Chances are we have in stock the part you're looking for, but if we don't we are connected by satellite to 650 parts depots in the United State and Canada, and can likely get the part you need overnight. Plus, we guarantee our used parts for 30 days. If you're not satisfied, send it back.

Our volume buying program is another way we offer savings to contractors. For example, we buy Fleetguard filters by the truckload. We also offer excellent value. We provide wear items, such as teeth, edges and pads, for nearly every brand of equipment, including Cat, at 20 to 40 percent less than our competition. Of special significance to AUC members, AIS has earned its reputation as the supplier to rely on for water and dewatering equipment. We offer a significant inventory, both sales and rentals, of pumps and generators for underground contractors.

**What do you feel is the biggest challenge facing companies like yours today?**

Helping our customers remain competitive, productive and profitable.

**How is your company going about meeting that challenge?**

Every AIS employee knows that providing the best equipment at the right time, backed by legendary product support, enhances customer profitability. All AIS employees have a focused commitment to continue setting new service standards.

AIS has always recognized the importance of the individual contractor, the smaller contractor. We consider it our job to help these individuals grow and become stronger. This ties back into AIS being non-union, which puts us in a better position to help individual contractors. I personally have received a lot of satisfaction in now working with the third generation of customers at AIS. Some started out very small and have grown to be large, successful companies.

AIS is fueled, focused and driven by its commitment to customer service. The strength of AIS performance the past few years has been timely, and we've recognized record gains in new customers while increasing business from our existing customers. Most gratifying has been the progress AIS has made in accomplishing our mission of helping customers become more profitable. Feedback from customers confirms this.

**Why should other AUC members become more involved with the association?**

AUC has grown into an excellent organization that has pulled underground contractors together in a united relationship. Working as a team with contractors, AUC presents a united front when dealing with state and federal legislators and bureaucracies, helping contractors become better, more profitable businesses.