

BUSINESS

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AimNet moves into Norwalk

By Richard Lee
Staff Writer

A new company focusing on the network infrastructure services marketplace has settled into facilities in Norwalk with the help of \$57 million in financial backing from four capital investment firms.

William E. Simon & Sons, Mellon Ventures, Clearlight Partners and North Atlantic Capital Group have thrown their support behind AimNet Solutions which plans to offer both professional and managed services to companies to sharpen their electronic business network.

The company has located its headquarters at the Merritt 7 Corporate Park complex on Route 7 and laboratory and technical facilities on Pearl Street. AimNet acquired and combined three operations to start its business: Alpine Computer Systems in Holliston, Mass.; Reese Web Inc. in Clearwater, Fla.; and CNS Group in Norwalk.

In the process, the company headed by Edward K. Nalbandian, immediately has a payroll of about 225 and about 600 clients.

The planning process took more than a year, said Nalbandian, who most recently was managing partner of AT&T's managed network solutions unit, a 1,400-person organization that achieved \$500 million in revenue in 1999.

"We have a broad base of customers. Most companies are dealing with rapid technical changes," said Nalbandian, whose new business is focusing on Fortune 250 to Fortune 2500 companies.

"We feel we're carving out a new niche in providing managed and professional services," Nalbandian said. "We believe our focus on both network professional and managed services across wide and local area network technologies for the mid-market makes us unique."

The company specializes in networking, information security and network architecture.

Combining three companies into one gives capital investors more confidence that the venture will be successful, said Robert Driscoll, who directs Mellon Venture's Philadelphia office. "That substantially reduces the risk. It's not a start-up. It's a high growth business with a world-class management team," said Driscoll, lauding Nalbandian's foresight. "He saw a need in the

marketplace to bring those services into the middle marketplace."

Cosmo J. Alberico, senior vice president and chief financial officer, most recently was vice president of finance and chief financial officer for international operations at Winstar Communications Inc., in New York City. He was also senior director, finance and program management for Sprint, the global telecommunications company in Shelton.

Other officers include Robert J. Boles, Jr., chief marketing and sales officer, formerly vice president of sales and support for IBM Global Network; Laurence A. Cranwell, senior vice president, managed network services, former head of Compaq and Digital's global network; and William Strain, vice president and chief technology officer, a former technology executive at AT&T.

Mellon has committed about \$10 million to the business, said Driscoll, and has earmarked another \$10 million for future investment.

Peter Simon co-chairman of William E. Simon & Sons, echoed Driscoll's comments.

"We are very excited about the launch of AimNet Solutions. In light of current market conditions, we believe AimNet is a great investment with tremendous growth potential as a network infrastructure services firm," said Simon. "Their business model which provides high value-added services, true scalability and long-term client partnerships, is exactly what we're looking to invest in."

The field has great potential, said Nalbandian. "It's a \$7 billion market going to \$30 billion in 2004."

AimNet plans to address the marketplace through its own sales force and strategic partnerships, resellers and agents. It already has relationships with several key technology partners, including Microsoft, Cisco, Citrix and Checkpoint.

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