

## GRAND FORKS BUSINESS: Looking greener all the time

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### **AE2S, ICON move into high-tech, green building**

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It features modern design, the latest in technology and a number of green building elements. But it was also built with an eye on practicality, maximizing the use of space and flexibility. Restraint was shown to avoid adding unnecessary extras.

“As a pragmatic engineer, my favorite part about green building is when it makes sense,” AE2S CEO Steve Burian said. “I didn’t want to just throw stuff on to check a box. I wanted to do stuff that makes sense.”

The three-story, 43,000-square-foot building just east of South 42nd Street near the Alerus Center and Canad Inns hotel has a geothermal heating and cooling system. Other green building features include energy-efficient glass, motion-sensing lights, waterless urinals and low-flow plumbing fixtures. Reclaimed wood and other recycled and locally produced materials were also used.

A long stormwater retention pond flanked by retaining walls outside is used for irrigation for landscaping at the site, with the rest slowly draining into the city sewer. Clumps of grass grow surrounded by pavers set up to aid drainage in part of the parking lot, another green touch and a nod to much of the water, wastewater and stormwater consulting work performed by AE2S.

“The new building gave us an opportunity to try out some things in our own facility,” said Shawn Gaddie, the operations and project manager for AE2S’ Grand Forks office staff, which moved into the new facility about a month ago. Gaddie said some of the property’s unique features allow the company to show clients how they look and work in a practical application.

ICON and AE2S did most of the design and engineering work on the joint venture. The two firms co-own the land and each own or share different parts of the building, including a 15,000-square-foot underground parking garage and three 2,000-square-foot spaces on the first floor that will be leased out or used for future growth.

Mike Kuntz, ICON's co-founder, said the building's design will be submitted for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design approval. He said LEED Gold or Platinum certification will be sought for the project from the U.S. Green Building Council.

But Kuntz said the building's value goes beyond its sustainable design and energy efficiency.

"We wanted to make sure we weren't doing ridiculous things just so we could say we were green," he said. "This isn't the most expensive building in Grand Forks, but I would argue that it is as nice as any building in the city."

The project received a step-down tax abatement from the city for the first five years and tax-free bonding assistance.