

BE READY

An experienced private security firm in Riverside helps individuals, families and businesses stay safe.

BY: TAMMY MINN

If you stay ready, you never have to get ready. That's the motto of Solutions Group International (SGI), a Riverside-based private security firm that was founded a little over 15 years ago by Mike Duffy, CEO, and George Holt, president.

The pair have a combined 50 years of municipal and federal law enforcement experience. "Our goal is to cultivate a culture of preparedness and awareness," Duffy says. To do that, SGI's corporate offices are housed in a 9,000-square-foot regional training center that includes a CrossFit gym, firearms training simulators, and a medical training lab. The company also offers training opportunities to local first responders and the general public through courses designed for a range of skill and fitness levels.

SGI provides security services that range from executive protection and estate security, to special events and threat vulnerability assessments. For a complete list of services, see solutionsgroupinternational.com.

Duffy answers a few questions:

How long have you been in Riverside? As a business we have been in Riverside for a little over two years. My business partner has resided in the Riverside area for many years. I have lived here since 1985.

Why did you choose Riverside for your corporate headquarters and regional training center? The deciding factor was the affordability of commercial space in Riverside and the city's welcoming environment for small businesses. Our selfish motivation for moving our corporate offices and opening our regional training center in Riverside is that we were tired of driving to Los Angeles and wanted a much shorter commute.

About how many people do you employ worldwide? Close to 120 people.

How can individuals, families and business owners assess their security risk? Each of those entities has its own inherent risk that require varying levels of assessment. However, a simple guide for conducting an assessment would include the following steps: Identify the potential hazards. Decide who and what will be harmed and how. Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions. Implement precautions.

Private security is a growing field, according to several business analysts. Why is that? Over the past few years, leading industries and sectors, such as entertainment, healthcare, transportation, banking and finance, among others, have witnessed a steady increase in the number of criminal incidents and physical breaches. Rising threats have created the need to maintain a high physical security posture for businesses, residential properties, as well as for personnel. Physical security must then continue to evolve globally as well.

Has social media played a role in making people more vulnerable? Yes. Social media appeals directly to our inherent human urge to share and connect. Sharing isn't the culprit, but rather what we are sharing and with whom. Social media has created a whole new hunting ground for predatory con artists who target people on these various networking sites. Some include messages which entice users to visit phony websites to steal credentials and money or they manipulate unsuspecting victims to open malware-laced attachments which can hack your computer. These techniques are tailored based on keen insight into targets obtained through social media.

You offer a Hollywood component, including a class called "Technical Training for Actors," a S.W.A.T. workshop. Which shows and films have you consulted on? We have been technical advisors on various productions that have included "Vanished," *Proud Mary* and "Hunted."

What's next for your firm? Our short range goal is to increase our security presence in the Inland Empire with a focus on the downtown area and desert cities. Concurrently, we are in the planning phase on a property we purchased in Montana to develop it into another training facility which will provide specialized security and firearms training for law enforcement, military and military veterans. ■



George Holt
and Mike Duffy
founding partners

PHOTO: JIM DORSEY