

Dr. Doug Nicholson has dreamed of working in Alaska for many years.

That dream is now becoming a reality. Nicholson informed administration and staff at Chase County Community Hospital last week that he will be accepting a new position in Tok, Alaska.

His wife Rita has also been offered a position in the area of women's health and mental health. They will start their new careers in December. Dr. Nicholson's last day of service at Chase County Community Hospital is tentatively set for Nov. 14.

Nicholson first came to Chase County Community Hospital in September 2008. When asked why rural Nebraska, Nicholson said, "I've always enjoyed the rural areas and never have been one to live in the city. I enjoy visiting the urban areas but really have no desire to live in one."

Imperial was also a good location, he said, as it is between Rita's hometown of Omaha and the Rocky Mountains which both enjoy.

The Nicholsons will once again be making their home in a small, remote community. Tok is a village of around 1,200 people, where he will be employed at the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center which is part of the Tanana Chiefs Conference.

This organization is dedicated to tribal empowerment through health, employment, economic development and family services. According to Nicholson, approximately six area villages access services at the health center.

Tok is located about three hours southeast of Fairbanks and about six hours northeast of Anchorage.

When reflecting on his time at Chase County Community Hospital and Clinic, Nicholson said, "This has clearly been the most rewarding job I have had in my career. The five years have been a real gift for me and will be tough, like big tears darkness tough, to leave.

"I've never stayed this long in one place and it has been very rewarding. However, Alaska has been a dream of mine for years and this opportunity gives both Rita and I the chance to realize some of our dreams. We are excited and a little scared," he said.

Nicholson also thanked the staff and community.

"From a deep part of me, thank you for letting me be a part of your world and enriching my life. Chase County Community Hospital has big strengths and a good core of people. I would recommend this hospital to any doctor who is looking for a place to practice where you are surrounded by a great support system," said Nicholson.

Chase County Community Hospital is in the process of recruiting medical providers to replace both Dr. Nicholson and Carol Cornelius, PAC. Cornelius resigned to take a position in Grant where she resides with her family. Her last day of service is today (Thursday).