



By Russ Pankonin

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Chase 3000, a local internet service provider, changed ownership as of Wednesday, July 8. Aaron and Erica Greene purchased the business from Steve and Jennifer Smith.

Greene joined Chase 3000 as a technician and installer in May, 2000 when the company launched a wireless broadband service.

Chase 3000 was among the first in the nation to launch such a service.

The company offers broadband internet service to the communities and rural areas of Imperial, Wauneta, Grant and Holyoke, Colo., including all of Chase County, the west two-thirds of Perkins County and Phillips County (Colo.) east to the state line.

Greene said they are excited about the opportunity.

He said Smith had mentioned selling the business and Greene suggested that he be the one to buy it.

Smith said that since they began in 1996 with a dial-up service, they have not raised their rate for basic internet, which remains at \$25.

Greene said they will continue to offer that service to customers at the same price.

In the last several months, Smith and Greene have been working to expand the capacity of bandwidth available to customers.

In the next several weeks, that will be complete, bringing 50 megs of bandwidth connectivity to the region.

Smith said the upgrade will bring about 8-10 times more bandwidth than has been available before.

As a result, Greene said the company, which will continue to be known as Chase 3000, will be able to offer speed upgrade packages to customers who need more speed when using the Internet.

The upgrade will also add redundancy to their system.

Greene plans to partner with Vista Beam, a wireless internet operator based in Scottsbluff, to handle customer service calls and tech support issues. The phone number will remain the same—308-882-3000.

Presently, the servers used to operate the business are located at the Smiths' home. Greene said he will relocate them to their new home later this summer.

Smith began Chase 3000 in 1996, offering dial-up internet service in Imperial. He expanded his offerings to other communities and brought wireless Internet service to the region in 1999.

Smith said Greene has been with them almost from the start of the wireless project and knows the operation inside and out.

Greene's wife, Erica, is a co-owner but will not be active in the business.

As for the Smiths, they plan to take some time off. Steve said he has a number of projects he wants to work on but needs some time away to refocus his efforts on them.

