

# BUSINESS TIMES®

Jan. 13-19, 2012

Serving Santa Barbara, Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties

Vol. 12, No. 45



STEPHEN NELLIS PHOTO

From left, Chris Rose, head of sales, and President Dave Clark of Santa Barbara-based Impulse Advanced Communications are rolling out a new broadband offering for mid-sized and smaller businesses.

## Web wars

### Impulse brings faster broadband to Santa Barbara

**By Stephen Nellis**  
Staff Writer

Impulse Advanced Communications has fired the latest salvo in the high-speed connectivity arms race in the Tri-Counties, targeting mid-sized and small businesses with a new broadband offering in the Santa Barbara area.

Impulse has poured money into new back-end equipment to deliver speeds from 5 to 40 megabits a second over standard copper lines and attained a new regulatory designation to deliver the service. For comparison, standard T1 lines — the most common option for small and mid-sized businesses — deliver between 1.5 megabits and 3 megabits a second.

The move comes as cities in the region begin to view connectivity options as integral to the competitiveness of their digital-first employers. In San Luis Obispo, Digital West has begun encircling the city with a fiber-optic ring that can deliver speeds of up to a gigabit a second — almost 1,000 times

faster than older T1 connections.

That kind of connectivity remains a high-end service for larger clients, but what Impulse is targeting in Santa Barbara is the no-man's land between T1 connections, which are typically a few hundred dollars a month, and fiber, which in the Santa Barbara region is practically a custom build-out and comes out to many thousands of dollars a month.

“Symmetrical broadband is what businesses really need,” said Chris Rose, head of sales at Impulse. “From T1 to fiber, there’s been this big hole.”

Symmetry — the same speed for uploads as for downloads — is becoming key for even small and mid-sized businesses. Social Intelligence, a Santa Barbara firm that can provide screened Internet research on prospective employees, needs not only fast and responsive Internet, but the same speed and responsiveness both ways.

“We’ve moved to a totally cloud-based infrastructure, and all our file sharing and mail is based in the cloud.

Being able to upload files and have it happen very quickly is very important to us,” said CEO Max Drucker, who participated in the pilot project for Impulse’s new deployment. “We historically have not had the same options that can be found in places like L.A. or San Francisco, so it’s a breath of fresh air to have a high-bandwidth, synchronous connection with low latency.”

Impulse has experience delivering really big pipes for large companies such as Select Staffing and Deckers Outdoor Corp. But for smaller clients, it spent money renting out space in five central offices and installing the latest copper-based networking gear. The benefit is that it uses existing wiring to the business’s door step and can be up and running in two weeks — far shorter than the time line for deploying fiber.

Dave Clark, president at Impulse, said fiber is eventually in the works, but the geography of the Carpinteria-Goleta tech corridor makes its installation trickier than the relatively compact San Luis Obispo.

“You have pockets of density here. Running fiber down Hollister Avenue, you’d have huge swaths where you’d have no customers. That’s what I’m grappling with,” he said.

In the meantime, Impulse will be working on an offering for even smaller businesses who are not quite in need of a T1 line but need a little more reliability and speed than consumer options such as DSL offer.

Rose said the company will take a different approach than when dealing with the chief technologists at billion-dollar companies. “With this new roll-out, we’ll be walking up and down State Street to mom-and-pop shops and restaurants,” he said.

“The next target for us is the small business between two and 10 employees,” Clark said. “They’ve been stuck for a while between consumer-oriented options and T1.”

*Impulse Advanced Communications -  
www.impulse.net*