

# Businessmen form wireless Internet company

*Past technology experience helps in plan to offer high-speed residential services*

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BUSINESS FIRST STAFF WRITER

Three businessmen in the technology field have formed a company to offer wireless residential Internet service in neighborhoods underserved by other high-speed Internet options.

The partners in My Neighborhood Broadband are John Binkley, founder of commercial wireless Internet service provider United Broadband Networks LLC; Scott Whalen, co-owner of WebSell & PCs, a New Albany computer services and equipment firm; and Shane Buis, Whalen's partner in WebSell & PCs.

The partners do not have formal titles with their new venture. My Neighborhood Broadband was formed earlier this year, and so far it is offering high-speed, wireless Internet service in the Highland Oaks subdivision in New Albany, off Kamer-Miller Road.

"The point of the partnership is to prove the technology works rather than work out the details of the partnership," Binkley said.

## Lack of service prompts offering

When the company began offering the service in Highland Oaks in April, the neighborhood didn't have any high-speed Internet access. Since then, New York City-based Insight Communications Inc. has begun to offer high-speed Internet access through its cable television service.

The business partners picked that neighborhood because they knew someone who lived there who informally polled neighbors and found out there was a demand for the wireless service, Whalen said.

Dr. Lawrence Mand, vice chancellor of in-

formation technology at Indiana University Southeast in New Albany, said wireless Internet might be the most efficient way to reach underserved parts of Southern Indiana. Mand also is chairman of the Southern Indiana Chamber of Commerce's technology council.

"Broadband is not a luxury," Mand said. "It is an absolute necessity. It's great to hear about companies like My Neighborhood Broadband. If they can increase their service area, that service will be in demand."

## How wireless works

The wireless Internet service signal comes from a tower in Floyds Knobs owned by iSkywire LLC. iSkywire and United Broadband Networks have a wholesale agreement that allows United Broadband Networks to buy the service from the iSkywire tower for an undisclosed amount. United Broadband Networks rebroadcasts the signal from Floyds Knobs to a home in Highland Oaks with a large antenna on its roof.

The owners of that home receive the service for free, and the antenna on top of the house broadcasts the service to small receivers inside the homes of subscribers.

Eleven homeowners in Highland Oaks pay the \$30-per-month fee for unlimited use of the service. Through WebSell & PCs, Whalen and Buis offer the equipment to get a homeowner up and running with wireless Internet for \$60 to \$140, depending on the location of the homeowner's computer.

Binkley said the company has invested about \$2,000 to set up the service. He declined to disclose the new company's revenue or net income, but he said it is breaking even.

**My Neighborhood  
Broadband** 

**Web site:** [www.mynbb.com](http://www.mynbb.com)

**Cost:** \$30 per month

**Availability:** Only in Highland Oaks subdivision in New Albany, Ind., but possibly expanding

## Customer pleased with service

Customer Scott Bassett, whose family has signed up for the service, said he's pleased with its speed and reliability.

"I like the fact that I can have a laptop or a computer on anywhere in the house and use the service," Bassett said. "The speed is fantastic, and the cost is competitive."

Bassett spends an average of 90 minutes a day online. He can work from home now that he has a faster Internet connection than the dial-up service he used previously, he said.

Bassett is manager of the process and control systems engineering group at Rohm and Haas Co. in Louisville. "I can upload and download large files now," Bassett said. "I could not do that before."

About 80 homes could be served from the one antenna on the house in New Albany, Binkley said. The business partners have relied on word-of-mouth and neighborhood meetings to spread information about the new service.

Binkley said the company might target other neighborhoods in the Louisville area.

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