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Michigan Indian Chamber of Commerce forms in Novi

Posted by [Mike Scott](#) | [Business Review](#) November 01, 2007 02:05AM

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A group of Asian Indian American business owners and executives have joined together to form the Michigan Indian Chamber of Commerce in Novi.

It is designed to create more opportunities for business networking and exposure for Asian Indians throughout the region, said Nipa Shah, chamber founder and president of Jenesys Group LLIC in Novi.

Shah has received interest from about 10 Asian Indian business leaders, but she envisions the organization will include nonexecutive members who want to increase their exposure and grow businesses.

"Many of us (Asian Indians) are first-generation Americans, and our children have unique challenges adapting to the American culture, so we also want to focus on developing opportunities for students," Shah said.

"We want to promote businesses owned and managed by Asian Indians, and this is a good way for us to be proactive."

The chamber will be designed to be just as valuable a resource for individuals, homemakers, companies, youths and people who aspire to be entrepreneurs, Shah said.

Strategically it will strive to serve as a robust "resource center" to meet the education, support, training, mentoring and networking needs of the Asian Indian community.

One community leader helping to establish the chamber is Minesh Baxi, an Oakland County resident and author of "Network Your Way to \$100,000 and Beyond" and a soon-to-be-released second book, "Stop Hiring Losers."

Baxi wants to become involved so he can help fellow Asian Indian residents in Southeast Michigan improve networking skills and become more involved in managing and running mainstream businesses.

"Our culture is known as including educated people with high intellects, but we're not always known as businessmen and -women," Baxi said. "We want to learn from each other's business successes and better promote ourselves not just as businesses being run by (Asian Indians) but growth businesses in general."

Membership dues are \$350 for established businesses, \$250 for emerging businesses, and \$150 for individuals. Nonprofits and students can join at no charge.

Shah believes the chamber will help improve communication between diverse groups within a large, affluent and educated Asian Indian community throughout Southeast Michigan.

"Everyone in our community talks about the lack of trust that prevents us from doing business with each other," Shah said. "It is unfortunate that (society) continues to (function) in our social sub-communities that are based on religion and social class, so this will be a very nonbureaucratic organization.

"Despite the large population of Asian Indians in the community, you rarely see businesses targeting our culture (for products and services)," Shah said. "Our culture needs to become more adept at networking in a business, rather than just a social setting."

The Michigan Indian Chamber will present programs and seminars to educate members on business activities and will include a mentorship element designed to help high school and college-age Asian Indian professionals learn the basics of entrepreneurship, Baxi said.

In addition to the grass-roots membership recruiting approach Shah mentioned, the existence of the MIICC will be marketed at community and cultural events being held in the area.

"We anticipate that membership will grow rapidly," Baxi said.

In an effort to increase communications with the community, the chamber is sponsoring "Round Table India," a weekly podcast that provides a forum for Asian Indians to discuss topics of interest, hot issues and share information. The podcasts are at www.miicc.com.

"We are striving to provide educational and other resources for our members as a way to get people excited about what we're trying to accomplish," Shah said.



Suzanne Yurenka

Nipa Shah of the Michigan Indian Chamber of Commerce.

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