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Ragula Bhaskar on Utah economic office board

By Aziz Haniffa in Washington DC, 4/13/2007 p.A38

Utah's Governor Jon M Huntsman Jr has appointed Ragula Bhaskar the newest member of the executive board of the Governor's Office of Economic Development.

According to Huntsman, Bhaskar, as one of the 2006 recipients of Connect Magazine's '25 People Who Most Influenced Business in Utah,' brought 'unique experience and economic expertise' to the job.

Bhaskar is president and chief executive officer of FatPipe Networks, a pioneering company in wireless networking.

Chennai-born Bhaskar, who immigrated to the US in 1981 to pursue graduate studies and then after an academic career at Pennsylvania State University and the University of Utah, co-founded FatPipe in 1990 with his wife Sanchaita Datta, the chief technical officer of the company, told India Abroad that as a member of the executive board of GOED, he aimed to focus on long-term goals in Utah, including creating more quality jobs here.

He said as an Indian-American entrepreneur he was blessed with 'an international perspective,' and said he 'hoped to bring more of this perspective to the group,' at the GOED.

Bhaskar said in a state "which has one of the most aggressive pro-business governors," and also "lots of seed money in terms of capital and plenty of homegrown talent that makes for a great combination," the potential for businesses in Utah to grow exponentially was virtually a given, especially "when the Office of Economic Development will always be looking out for them."

Since its inception, Fatpipe, has been recognized by many sources as one of the fastest-growing private companies in the stat and the country. Inc 500 ranked it the 189th fastest-growing private US company in 2004. The Deloitte Technology Fast 500 in 2006 ranked it the 381st fastest-growing company in North America.

It counts among its clients the Federal Bureau of Investigation, major defense contractor Northrop Grumman, West Corporation, the Julliard School of Music in New York, Tyco International, and also 18 of the top 100 hotels and 13 of the top 100 law firms in the country.

In 2006, the Utah Economic Development Board named Bhaskar one of the top 25 high-tech CEOs in the state; the previous year, he was a finalist for the Ernst and Young's 2005 Entrepreneur of the Year award.



Bhaskar told India Abroad he was pleased that readers of Connect magazine, the state's leading business publication, "would select me and Sanch [as his wife is popularly known] as two of the top 25 most influential business people in the state. I hope we can continue to contribute to the community in a meaningful way."

He noted that both he and his wife "serve on the Center of Excellence Review Board, which helps bridge the gap between university student programs and the business community.

"We review ideas from the university for technology commercialization and "d help companies move from the university into commercial enterprises," he said.

Last month, Bhaskar was also recognized by vspring Capital, a venture capital firm founded

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and operated by another leading Utah entrepreneur, Dinesh Patel, who like Bhaskar is also a close friend of Huntsman and served on his gubernatorial transition team and also helped the governor and his wife adopt a child from India.

Along with Bhaskar, he helped organize Diwali functions at the Governor's mansion for two years running. He was declared one of Utah's Top 100 Entrepreneurs and was a recipient of the V/100 Award.

Patel said, "this year's V/100 list includes some very remarkable people," and said it "serves as an instructive demonstration of the state's potential for growth and development, especially in the technology sector."

Before founding FatPipe, Bhaskar, who received a PhD in engineering, a dual masters of science degree in engineering and operations research and an MBA with a specialization in finance, all from the Pennsylvania State University, worked as a research technologist in the engineering department of PSU, before moving to Salt Lake City to take up an appointment with the University of Utah, first as an assistant and then a tenured associate professor of Mining Engineering.

He told Connect magazine that

the scariest thing he's every done was training in one of the world's deepest mines, the Champion Reefs Mine in the Kolar Gold Fields in Karnataka.

Bhaskar, then only 18, recalled that 'to go to the lowest level, we had to take wet, rickety wooden ladders down the shaft to from the 9,500 feet level to the 10,000 feet level, and since miners tend not to wear safety harnesses, if I had slipped and fallen, it would have been a few 100 feet of freefall to a watery bottom.'

He has won several honors for academic achievements, and is a member of Mensa, and a former member and chapter president of Sigma Xi, the scientific research honor society.