Ragula Bhaskar heads Utah Governor-elect's review panel

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in Washington, DC

On the heels of Dinesh Patel's appointment as one of four co-chairs of Republican Governor-elect Jon Huntsman's transition team (*India Abroad*, December 3), another top Indian American entrepreneur has been tapped to head an important Review Committee.

Dr Ragula Bhaskar, 45, of Salt Lake City, president, CEO and founder of FatPipe Networks, has been appointed by Huntsman as co-chairman of the Review Committee of Utah State's Boards and Commissions for the new administration.

Bhaskar's responsibilities include assessing the value, relevance and contribution of the state's 400 boards and commissions. He will focus on each group's talent base, budget and history and document his findings in a report.

Bhaskar, an Independent, declared, "It is an honor to be asked by Governor Huntsman to participate in government processes. This allows me to give back to my community in a meaningful way while maintaining and growing FatPipe Networks."

He lauded Huntsman for creating a group of business leaders, academia and government officials to form a focused transition team unbridled by political affiliations.

Bhaskar told *India Abroad*, "As co-chair, my main objective will be to examine the effectiveness and performance of each of 400-odd boards and commissions to determine how they can advance the new governor's social and economic agenda as well as the interests of the state."

The appointment of Bhaskar and Patel — one of Utah's leading entrepreneurs and community leaders — to such senior positions not only means minorities' entry into the administration but ensures the presence of qualified people with expertise in a range of areas. The new governor, Bhaskar said, was keeping to his pledge during the campaign that his primary focus would be 'to bring in the most qualified people help him shape his agenda.'

"Governor-elect Huntsman's concern is to stimulate Utah's economy," he said. "He is not driven solely by partisan politics. He has pooled together Utah's most prominent business leaders to form a transition team that can help him understand how to improve the state government's functioning to improve revenue generation for the state."

Chennai-born Bhaskar came to the US in 1981 to do his graduation after earning his business technology degree from the Indian School of Mines in Dhanbad, Bihar. The latter was part of the University Grants Commission.

After receiving a dual master of science in engineering and operations research and a master of science degree in business administration [*with a specialization in finance*] from the Pennsylvania State University in 1984, he obtained a PhD from the university in 1987 while working as a research technologist in the engineering department of Penn State. He moved to Utah in 1988 when he got a job as assistant professor of mining engineering at the University of Utah.

In 1994, Bhaskar received tenure at the university but was bitten by the consulting bug. After starting FatPipe Networks — which used his invention of router-clustering technology to provide highly reliable and high-speed Internet/WAN access for mission critical applications — as a consulting company, he did his first major round of financing in 2000, and another in 2002. He established FatPipe as a full-fledged firm.

Bhaskar's idea of 'cluster-routing' — combining data lines from multiple providers like AT&T and Sprint into a big fat pipe that would be reliable and secure — didn't have many takers at first. Many people couldn't grasp the idea and were skeptical. Venture capitalist Tim Draper gave Bhaskar the initial seed money and invested in FatPipes to get the company going.

The recipient of several honors and awards for academic achievements, Bhaskar is a member of Mensa and a former member and Chapter President of Sigma Xi, the scientific research honor society.

He was the youngest member of the Advisory Committee to Secretary of Labor Lynn Martin in the Bush Sr [*the President's father*] administration on labor-related technology issues. He was one of the youngest president-elects of the Society of Mining Engineers. Bhaskar decided not to become president in 1994 "as it was when I decided to leave the industry and start a company."

"Becoming president of SME would have meant a full-time commitment. I didn't believe I could do it as I was devoting my energy to the company I was setting up. I was heavily involved in consulting work."

Bhaskar serves as a trustee and member of the Public Policy Committee of the Utah Information Tech Association; member of the Industrial Advisory Committee of the College of Engineering at the University of Utah and a member of the review panel for the State of Utah Centers of Excellence.

He has over 30 articles to his credit in specialty magazines and journals on many subjects, including behavior of fine particles, distributed database design, fractals and WAN technology and engineering.

Bhaskar holds five patents and has filed for additional patents and invention disclosures.

He has been nominated for Ernst and Young's Utah Entrepreneur of the Year award three times and was recently profiled in *Connect Magazine* as one of Utah's top entrepreneurs.

Bhaskar was profiled by the Utah Economic Development Board as one of the Top 25 High Tech CEOs in Utah and has been a consultant to companies such as Utah Power and Light, Cyprus and FMC on engineering, cost control and management accounting areas.

FatPipe Networks has grown from nine employees to over 65. It was recently named in *Inc Magazine's* Inc 500 as one of America's fastest-growing private companies in 2004, ranking 189th in the list and the 10th fastest growing company of the 16 Utah-based businesses named on the list.

FatPipe was ranked sixth on MountainWest Venture Group's 100 Fastest Growing Companies in Utah.