



Smithsonian Asian Pacific
American Program

PRESS RELEASE:
THURSDAY, OCT. 11, 2007

CONTACT: Francey Youngberg
(202) 487-8160

**SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION LAUNCHES EXPLORATORY PHASE
TO SHOWCASE INDIAN AMERICAN HISTORY**
Indian American Community and Others Invited To Weigh In

WASHINGTON – Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program Director **Franklin Odo** today kicked-off an exploratory phase for a major project to showcase Indian American history and experiences at the Smithsonian Institution, the world's largest museum and research complex. Odo made the announcement with Indian American community leaders this morning at a news conference at the Capital Gallery, inviting others to weigh in so the Smithsonian can solicit input and gauge support.

The project, called *HomeSpun: Made In The U.S.A.*, seeks to establish a permanent presence at the Smithsonian dedicated to the history, achievements and contributions of America's rapidly growing Indian American population. *HomeSpun* will chronicle the immigration of Indians to this country and point to the impact and contributions they have made in diverse fields like medicine, engineering, technology, education, culture, the arts, media and politics.

Odo pointed out that the Smithsonian dedicated a special section for Sikh Americans and their contributions to American society in an exhibit 3-years ago, but *HomeSpun* strives to be a much larger project about a broader Indian American experience.

"There are millions of Indian Americans, but the story of their struggle and emergence in this country is largely unknown to the general public," said Odo at today's news conference. "It's time to tell the story of the people of India who have made their home in America for more than 2 centuries."

Working with the Smithsonian, Indian American community leaders **Parag Mehta** and **Toby Chaudhuri** have formed a working group to help make this dream a reality. Mehta and Chaudhuri joined Odo at today's news conference optimistic that there will be considerable community support for the effort.

HomeSpun plans to include a national traveling exhibition, related public programming at the Smithsonian, a dedicated website and a middle school curriculum guide for the Smithsonian's young visitors, depending on the availability of materials and funds. The entire project will be made available to the 24 million visitors who come to the Smithsonian every year and nearly 100 million other visitors on the Internet.

###

****NOTE: To support the HomeSpun project, please contact Krishna Aniel, 202-633-2690 or anielk@si.edu.**