

From Uzbekistan to Phoenix

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In Phoenix, which has the largest U.S. population of Bukharian Jews outside of New York City, the Bukharian community has certainly made its mark.

The city's three kosher restaurants - Bon Appetit, King Solomon's Pizza and Segal's (a fourth, Haifa Restaurant, closed last weekend) - and its two kosher markets - Imperial Market and Segal's - are owned by members of the Bukharian community.

Jews from Bukhara are moving to Phoenix "because of the weather - it is exactly like Uzbekistan," says Nisan Zadikov, who runs the Bukharian Youth Organization of Arizona. Other attractions are the economy and the real-estate market, he says; the prominent occupations within the local community are barber, shoe repair, real-estate agent and car dealer.

Zadikov's father, Rabbi Amnon Zadikov, is the chief rabbi of the Bukharian Jewish Congress of Arizona, one of two local Bukharian organizations.

Zadikov estimates that about 850 Bukharian families live in the Greater Phoenix area.

The first locally established Bukharian synagogue was organized in 1998; worshippers met in the founders' home. From 2000 to 2004, the community owned a facility at Glendale Avenue and 10th Street in Phoenix. Since then, the community has developed into two organizations: the Bukharian Jewish Congress of Arizona and the Phoenix Buchori Jewish Community-Shaarei Tzion Ohel Bracha.

On Jan. 7, the congress celebrated the grand opening of its new facility, 727 E. Glendale Ave. in Phoenix. Nearly 300 people attended, according to Zadikov, and the celebration included special guests Isaac Yehushua, chief rabbi of the Bukharian Jewish Congress of the USA and Canada; Boris Kandov, president of the same group; and Rafael Nektal, editor of the New York-based newspaper The Bukharian Times.

The congress has a second facility at Bell Road and 16th Street in Phoenix.

"The community continues to grow," notes Rabbi Zvi Holland of The Phoenix Community Kollel, who has worked closely with Shaarei Tzion Ohel Bracha, which moved into its facility at 6516 N. Seventh St. in Phoenix in February 2005.

And it looks poised to grow even more: Shaarei Tzion Ohel Bracha is establishing a small residential subdivision at Seventh Avenue and Bell Road in Phoenix, where 19 semi-custom homes and a synagogue are planned for a 4 1/2-acre parcel of land.

Ian Turner, a local developer hired by M&I Holdings who is working with the community, estimates that the homes will be finished by the end of the year, followed by the synagogue.

"The priority was to build a synagogue and build community," he says.

Local Bukharian organizations

Bukharian Jewish Congress of Arizona

727 E. Glendale Ave.; 1601 E. Bell Road,
Suite A3, Phoenix 602-434-4431

Phoenix Buchori Jewish Community-Shaarei Tzion Ohel Bracha
6516 N. Seventh St., Suite 200, Phoenix
602-277-5366

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