

Multicultural media join forces to gain clout

Editor's note: This is a preview of a story that appears in the spring 2013 issue of Gateway Journalism Review.

Multicultural populations in the Midwest historically have been under-represented in political elections, community initiatives and in media. Business leaders in minority populations in Minnesota and Michigan have decided it is time for their communities to have a place at the political table. In these states, alliances have been formed between media outlets to enhance multicultural coverage and to bolster political clout.

New Michigan Media (NMM) and Minnesota Multicultural Media Consortium (MMMC) each have unique projects and goals, but all came together to increase the opportunities for multicultural communities through media efforts.

“It (NMM) began about four or five years ago,” said Hayg Oshagan, one of the organizers of the group. “The idea was that by bringing together ethnic and minority media in the region you could have a much more powerful entity. Before, each person represented a small group, but now together we represent a large group of people. This gives us more influence in politics – to be more visible in policy issues.

“We also wanted to create visibility of minority issues for the mainstream population. And to create visibility between minority populations, which sometimes operate in silos, they need to know what is going on.”

The Minnesota consortium started in the 1990s. Unlike NMM, it was funded with private funds.