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### **Shops seek cash to stretch out**

City redevelopment program to award \$100,000 in grants to Newhall businesses

When the owners of a yoga studio in downtown Newhall retired about a month ago, Laurie Jacobs decided it was up to her to make sure residents had a place to stretch.

"I couldn't let this place close, for the community and myself," she said. "I thought, 'Here's my opportunity to own a business.'"

She bought the business and used part of her life savings to remodel the building, she said. Her new goal is to get more people interested in the Indian exercise.

Jacobs is one of 27 other Newhall business owners hoping to get up to \$5,000 from the city's redevelopment agency to help pay for their business expenses.

It's the first time the city has offered money directly to business owners, said city spokeswoman Gail Ortiz.

Money will be awarded in January or February.

The city has \$100,000 to give to Newhall businesses, meaning it could help about 20 business owners, said Santa Clarita redevelopment analyst Alex Hernandez.

City staff is currently reviewing applications to make sure they were filled out correctly, Hernandez said. A five-member selection committee will rank the applications to determine who will get money from the city, he said.

The selection committee will have one member each from the Santa Clarita Valley Chamber of Commerce, the Old Town Newhall Merchant Association, the Newhall Redevelopment Committee and two members of city staff, Hernandez said.

Business owners were encouraged to go to classes hosted by the College of the Canyons Small Business Development Center.

People who participated in the business classes were awarded points which

improves their chance of getting a city grant, said Steve Tannehill, the director of the business development center.

Meanwhile, Jacobs said she'd buy new outdoor signs for her yoga studio, paint the inside and get new light fixtures. But she would spend most of it to advertise the studio and get the word out about the benefits of yoga, she said.

The studio has 15 different yoga teachers and gets 10 to 30 students daily, Jacobs said.

Jacobs, who moved to the Santa Clarita Valley from West Los Angeles eight months ago, has gone to marketing and customer service classes offered through the city.

She said she was excited to hear that only 27 businesses had applied for the grants, and is hopeful about getting a share of the cash.

"I'm crossing my fingers, Jacobs said. "Who couldn't use \$5,000?"

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