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## Oregon businesspeople organize 'Flight for Freedom' to NYC

Aliza Earnshaw

Citing Oregon's traditional pioneer spirit, business and civic figures have announced that they are organizing a "Flight for Freedom" beginning Saturday, Oct. 6. A delegation of 200 Oregonians will fly from Portland, Ore., to New York City that weekend.

The gesture is both symbolic and practical, said Sho Dozono, chairperson of the Portland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and president of Azumano Travel. "We want to send a message that we will not be cowed by terrorism," he said. "We hope that all chambers in Oregon and around the country will sponsor similar Flights for Freedom. It's symbolic, a symbol of America getting back on its feet. The business of America is business."

Dozono will be joined by many Portland business and civic figures who also wish to combat the fears of travel felt by many Americans in the wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, and the recent tendency to curtail spending. Jack McGowan, executive director of SOLV (Stop Oregon Litter and Vandalism), said, "We'll stand tall with New Yorkers to show that the economy may have been knocked down, but it hasn't been knocked out."

"Mayor Giuliani has asked us to come to New York, so in the spirit that brought pioneers west on the Oregon Trail, Oregonians now will journey back east to put a face on freedom," said Bruce Samson, Portland business and community leader, who recently retired from his position as counsel for Portland Public Schools.

Dozono is currently in the process of setting up meetings for Portland academics, school board members, members of civic organizations, public safety officials and others with their counterparts in New York City. Businesspeople who have committed to participate in the trip plan to renew commercial ties between Oregon and New York.

Participants in the trip plan to pay their respects to those who died in the terrorist attacks at Union Square, where a citizens' memorial has grown up over the last two weeks. The group will participate in the Columbus Day Parade, and then individual members plan to make personal contacts with New Yorkers in all walks of life.

Business executives that have canceled trips need to rethink those decisions, said Dozono. "CEOs of small to medium-large companies should reinstate the business plans they have put on hold," he said. "I'm working with the AAA to reinstate meetings they were planning before the attacks. I'm calling on all business leaders to do the same."

Dozono said that ordinary citizens also have a role to play in bolstering the economy. "We need to go back to living as we did before Sept. 11. Why let the terrorists win this war? Who's winning this economic war? We're doing it to ourselves," he said. "Just do what you were planning to do--go to business meetings, go to Europe or Asia on vacation as you planned to. Let us win our own battle with our own fears."

Oregonians interested in joining this "Flight for Freedom" may contact the Flight for Freedom Committee at 503-721-8700 or via e-mail at [flightforfreedom@azumano.com](mailto:flightforfreedom@azumano.com).

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