

NEWS - Agent Issues

Portland agent wins 2002 award (11/9/2002)

HONOLULU -- ASTA's 2002 Agent of the Year award went to the Oregon travel agent who brought 1,000 community and corporate leaders to New York in a show of support after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Sho Dozono, president and CEO of Portland's Azumano Travel, also was recognized for the creative promotion of his home state to Pacific Rim travelers for the past 16 years.

His efforts spurred the production of a TV series, "From Oregon with Love."

It is produced in conjunction with Fuji Television in Japan and is credited with generating significant inbound tourism to Oregon from Japan.

Working with the Portland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, of which he was chairman, Dozono organized a Flight for Freedom, a program that prompted nearly 1,000 Oregonians a month to fly after the terrorist attacks.

"Sho's commitment and devotion to the travel industry and ASTA is evident in everything he does," said ASTA president Richard Copland.

Dozono said that he and his wife came up with the idea of taking 1,000 Oregonians to New York in the days after the Sept. 11 tragedy, when he was forced to lay off 35 employees and reduce hours for the rest of his staff.

"We felt the need to show that we wanted to take back our lives, particularly the freedom to travel," he said.

Other award recipients at this year's congress included:

- Prem Paul Ohri, ASTA's International Travel Agent of the Year. Ohri, an ASTA member since 1957, is the owner of G.C. Nanda & Sons and founder of the Society's Singapore chapter.
- Donna Flora, vice president of Travel Industry Relations for American Express, recipient of the Society for Accessible Travel & Hospitality's Access to Freedom Crystal Star Stream award.

The SATH award is presented annually to an individual or group that promotes awareness of and access for disabled travelers.

- Michael Maino, retired president and CEO of the International Airlines Travel Agent Network, who was presented with ASTA's Allied Member of the Year Award.
- Mario Perillo of Italy, specialist Perillo Tours and Sandals' founder and chairman Gordon "Butch" Stewart, who were inducted into ASTA's Travel Hall of Fame.
- SNCF/French National Railroads and Karakorum Expeditions Mongolia, which were presented separately with ASTA's Environmental Award.