

BEST FREQUENT FLYER AND FREQUENT GUEST PROGRAMS CHOSEN IN THE 12TH ANNUAL FREDDIE AWARDS

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO - Continental OnePass and Starwood Preferred Guest take the top awards in the 12th annual Freddie awards sponsored by InsideFlyer magazine, MCI WorldCom, SkyGuide from American Express, Biztravel.com, MaxMiles and ClickRewards, InsideFlyer Editor and Publisher Randy Petersen announced today.

The awards were announced today during a ceremony at the Hotel Inter-Continental New York. The event was also webcast live via the Internet using some of the latest digital technology. A recap of the event may be viewed online at www.freddieawards.com.

A total of 103,488 ballots were cast this year by frequent travelers from around the Americas. The awards represent excellence in frequent travel programs and rate the best frequent flyer and frequent guest programs in eight different categories: Program of the Year, Best Award Best Bonus Promotion, Best Web Site, Best Elite-Level Program, Best Newsletter, Best Award Redemption and Best Customer Service. The Best Affinity Credit Card was also chosen.

Seventy-seven percent of the Freddie ballots were cast via the Internet this year, compared to 10 percent cast online in 1995. Surprisingly, though, that number dropped from last year's 82 percent of votes cast online. This year, 23 percent were received via fax and mail, proving traditional methods of communication are still important to frequent flyers. To ensure accuracy, votes were subject to three audits using a variety of technology.

Freddie Awards focus on quality, not quantity. Winners are determined not by how many votes a program receives but by the overall merits of each program as reflected in "Value Voting." Value Voting asks the voter to assign a number between one and 10 to the program he or she votes for. The popular vote is still important, however; to be eligible to win a Freddie Award, a program must receive at least 10 percent of the votes as the highest popular vote getter.

This year's winners are:

Program of the Year

Airline: Continental OnePass

Hotel: Starwood Preferred Guest

Best Award

Airline: Continental OnePass (25,000-mile award from New York or Houston to Tokyo)

Hotel: Hilton HHonors (VIPs only, six nights for 100,000 points)

Best Bonus Promotion

Airline: Southwest Rapid Rewards (double credit for booking online)

Hotel: Hyatt Gold Passport (Nights After Nights)

Best Affinity Credit Card

Diners Club Club Rewards

Best Newsletter

Airline: AeroMexico Club Premier

Hotel: Marriott Rewards

Best Web Site

Airline: Continental OnePass

Hotel: Starwood Preferred Guest

Best Elite-Level Program

Airline: Continental OnePass

Hotel: Starwood Preferred Guest

Best Award Redemption

Airline: Southwest Rapid Rewards

Hotel: Starwood Preferred Guest

Best Customer Service

Airline: Southwest Rapid Rewards

Hotel: Starwood Preferred Guest

The Randy's

Along with the Freddie Awards, InsideFlyer publisher Randy Petersen makes his annual picks for those programs that best served frequent travelers in 1999.

Randy's choices are:**Industry Impact Awards**

Northwest WorldPerks - When American AAdvantage announced in August that it would put a stop to expiring miles, several other major programs followed and many assumed American began the trend. In truth, Northwest WorldPerks started the domino effect when it announced early in 1999 that WorldPerks miles would no longer expire as of March 1. That change was made to accommodate WorldPerks' partnership with Continental OnePass, but it forced other programs to look at their expiration policies.

FlyerTalk - While just over a year old, no other Web site or community of frequent travelers has had more impact on the industry or individual members of programs than FlyerTalk. The amazing thing about FlyerTalk is that it has evolved on its own with no direct moderator. With over 100,000 posts related to every aspect of frequent traveler programs, it seems the Internet has given the right of comment directly to the frequent traveler and FlyerTalk best represents this.

Rising Star Award

Alaska Mileage Plan - Alaska Airlines has formed a number of unique partnerships with several major airlines that has increased this program's value for its membership. These partnerships allow members to earn miles on partner flights that count toward elite status, a practice followed by no other individual airline. This allows members of this small regional airline program to earn miles toward elite status when they fly just about anywhere in the world. Also, Alaska has aligned itself with several major airline alliances rather than a specific one.

