

## **BEST FREQUENT FLYER AND FREQUENT GUEST PROGRAMS CHOSEN IN THE 16TH ANNUAL FREDDIE AWARDS -- ALASKA AIRLINES AND STARWOOD HOTELS ARE BIG WINNERS ... AGAIN**

**COLORADO SPRINGS, COLO (April 30, 2004)** -- It was a year of repeat performances at the 16th Annual Freddie Awards, as Alaska Airlines Mileage Plan was voted frequent flyer Program of the Year among American-based programs for the second year in a row, and for the fifth consecutive year Starwood Preferred Guest took top honors in the frequent guest category. Diners Club Club Rewards was named top Americas credit card for the seventh consecutive year, and the America West FlightFund program made it two in a row in the Best Elite-Level Program-Americas category. The awards were announced yesterday by InsideFlyer Editor and Publisher Randy Petersen during a ceremony at the Embassy Suites Hotel, New York City. Over 200 airline, hotel and credit card representatives attended the ceremony, along with several members of the voting public.

Mr. Petersen also presented two special awards during the ceremony. The Air Canada Aeroplan program was presented with an "Industry Impact Award" to honor its introduction of personalized elite-level benefits. And a "Distinguished Achievement Award" was given to Congressman C.A. Dutch Ruppberger in recognition for his efforts in developing and growing the Operation Hero Miles program, which has provided transport home for thousands of U.S. military personnel stationed in the Middle East through the use of donated frequent flyer miles.

For the fourth consecutive year, Starwood Preferred Guest swept the top awards in both the Americas and International categories. Among internationally based airlines, the various awards were split between several programs. Swiss TravelClub and Virgin Atlantic flying club both won two awards apiece, while TAP Portugal Navigator, KLM Flying Dutchman, Emirates Skywards and SAS EuroBonus each walked away with one.

A total of 277,756 ballots were cast this year by frequent travelers from around the world. 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.

The Freddie Awards honor quality, not quantity. Winners are determined based on 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 for which he or she votes. To be eligible to win a Freddie Award, however, a program must receive at least one percent of the popular vote.

This year, InsideFlyer magazine partnered with Nextel, Executive Traveler/SkyGuide, USAToday.com, SmarterLiving.com and Points.com to bring travelers the 16th Annual Freddie Awards. The event was webcast live and a recap of the event can be viewed online at [www.freddieawards.com](http://www.freddieawards.com).