



Robert Chase at the State Legislative ceremonies.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

SBA Regional Minority Advocate of the Year Award. Robert Chase, Ph.D. is the current Minority Advocate of the Year Award winner for the state of Hawai'i and SBA Region IX, which includes the states of Arizona, California, and Nevada in addition to Hawai'i. This is a highly competitive award and was won by Chase for his work as the program director of the Rural Economic Transition Assistance - Hawai'i (RETA-H) program.

Under Chase's leadership, this grant program -- designed to assist former sugar workers to become small business people and to diversify the state's agriculture -- created in its first fifty projects 274 independent businesses and 929 new jobs and put 28,000 acres of former sugar lands back into production.

For these achievements, Chase was recognized by the SBA and in ceremonies before the State Legislature, which passed Resolutions of Commendation.

SBA Regional Financial Advocate of the Year Award. Darryl Mleynek, State Director of the Hawai'i SBDC Network, received the SBA's Financial Advocate of the Year Award for 2000. This, too, was awarded for the state of Hawai'i and for SBA Region IX.

Mleynek was recognized for his leadership of the Hawai'i SBDC Network and its accomplishments in the economic development of Hawai'i. Specifically cited was the \$24.9 million in annual economic impact for the previous year that resulted from the activities of the Hawai'i SBDC Network.

For these accomplishments, Mleynek was recognized by the SBA and in ceremonies before the State Legislature, which passed Resolutions of commendation.

SBA Maui County Minority Advocate of the Year Award. In 1998, David Fisher, Center Director of the Maui SBDC, received the Minority Advocate of the Year Award for the County of Maui. His citation included not only his extraordinary contribution to his clients, but also his service on the Governor-appointed, Senate-confirmed Community-Based Economic Development Advisory Council. He is currently serving his second term on this important council.

SBA Kaua'i County Financial Advocate of the Year Award. In 1997, Randy Gingras, Center Director of the Kaua'i SBDC, received the Financial Advocate of the Year Award for the County of Kaua'i. The award cited his uncommon dedication to his clients and the results he achieved in working with them, especially in helping them obtain financing for their businesses. It also cited his contribution to the development of the Hawai'i Community Loan Fund. He is currently serving as the chair of the HCLF Board of Directors.

Outstanding Project of the Year Award for Economic Development. The National Association of Management and Technology Assistance Centers (NAMTAC) selected the RETA-H Program for its 1999 Outstanding Project of the Year Award for Economic Development.

Hawai'i State Award of Excellence. In 1998, the Hawai'i SBDC Network received the Hawai'i State Award of Excellence from Lt. Governor Mazie Hirono. This award is based upon and affiliated with the Malcolm Baldrige National Award for achieving high quality, world-class excellence in operations. The Hawai'i SBDC Network is the only SBDC in the nation to have received a comparable state award.

Accreditation. Also, in 1998, the Hawai'i SBDC Network was accredited by the Association of Small Business Development Centers under a rigorous program required by the U.S. Congress. The SBDC Program is the only economic program with an accreditation requirement.