Mahabir Pun Receives 2014 Jonathan B. Postel Service Award

Internet Society recognizes Pun's role in bringing the Internet to Nepal, increasing digital literacy and education access for the rural Himalayan region

[Toronto, Canada-- 23 July 2014] -- The Internet Society today announced that its prestigious Jonathan B. Postel Service Award was presented to Mahabir Pun for his key role in bringing the Internet to rural Nepal with the founding of the Nepal Wireless Networking Project. Pun was selected by an international award committee, comprised of former Jonathan B. Postel award winners, which placed particular emphasis on candidates who have supported and enabled others in addition to their own specific actions.

In 2002, Mr. Pun's goal was to connect the people of only a few villages of Nepal by bringing the Internet to rural schools. Faced with many obstacles, Mr. Pun had to build a wireless network in the remote Himalayan region using Wi-Fi, which was an emerging technology at the time. In addition, he had to contend with the government of Nepal's ban on the importation and use of wireless equipment because of fighting between Maoist rebels and government forces. He was also confronted with the fact that many of the villages did not have roads, electricity, and phone lines, and had never seen computers. In spite of these difficulties, by 2013, Mr. Pun helped connect more than 175 remote villages in 15 districts of Nepal. Today, these communities are all benefiting from the Internet, with e-learning, e-healthcare, communication, and local e-commerce.

"Mahabir Pun has made a tremendous contribution to Nepal, with profound implications for the people of that region now and in the future," said Kathy Brown, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Internet Society. "He faced unfathomable challenges, and this award is a testament to his dedication, fortitude and courage in helping to connect his country to the world."

The Postel Award was established by the Internet Society to honor individuals or organizations that, like Jon Postel, have made outstanding contributions in service to the data communications community. The award is focused on sustained and substantial technical contributions, service to the community, and leadership.

The Internet Society presented the award, including a US$20,000 honorarium and a crystal engraved globe, during the 90th meeting of the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) held in Toronto, Canada, 20 July – 25 July 2014.

About the Internet Society

The Internet Society (www.internetsociety.org) is the trusted independent source for Internet information and thought leadership around the world. It is also the organizational home for the

Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF). With its principled vision, substantial technological foundation and its global presence, the Internet Society promotes open dialogue on Internet policy, technology, and future development among users, companies, governments, and other organizations. Working with its members and Chapters around the world, the Internet Society enables the continued evolution and growth of the Internet for everyone.

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