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SHIBA volunteer, Michael Majowicz of Aloha, among winners of 2010 Oregon Governor's Volunteer Awards

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Michael Majowicz monitors a presentation on Social Security benefits to see if the course he created to help other volunteers needs any fine tuning.

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All Michael Majowicz really was looking for was an excuse to get out of the house.

What he found was much more.

"I get bored without things to do," he says.

"Once I retired, it took me six months to go through the 'honey-do' list that I was able to avoid while I was working," he says with a grin. "It seemed like I should be doing something better with my time than sitting around getting older."

What he found to occupy himself was the **Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance** program. For his efforts, Majowicz is among 20 individuals and seven organizations to receive one of the **2010 Oregon Governor's Volunteer Awards** to be

presented Friday in Salem.

The 72-year-old Aloha resident had earned himself a pleasant retirement. He spent his youth knocking around a number of jobs in the Pacific Northwest before enlisting in the Navy. After 11 years in uniform -- including service off the coast of Vietnam during the war -- he left active duty to join the reserves.

He spent 28 years with **Hewlett-Packard**, retiring as a tech support engineer working with customers throughout the Pacific Northwest.

"Once I retired I began getting all this mail from different companies about medical insurance, Social Security and requests to sign up for this plan or some other plan for benefits.

"I discovered that not all the information was accurate, and not all of it was really with the best interest of the senior in mind.

"I realized how confusing it can be for people," he says. There are so many options, Majowicz explains, and not all of them are legal.

Then one day he got a letter from **AARP**, asking if he'd consider training to become a volunteer to help other retirees negotiate the Medicare swamp.

"I figured it would be a couple hours every once in a while," he says.

Instead, his work with the state's Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA) program has become a reason to get up every day.

In a normal week, Majowicz will meet with at least five people to go over their options for medical coverage. In addition to face-to-face counseling, he also spends hours at the computer or sifting through medical plans in order to compare them.

His efforts have not gone without notice.

Washington County Disability, Aging and Veteran Services, which serves as a local sponsor

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