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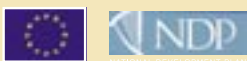
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Modern Timber Homes wins Business of the Year Award.

DCEB Review of 2005

The poet Patrick Kavanagh wrote "Through a chink too wide there comes in no wonder" –and he was right. If we knew what our future would be we have the resolve to proceed. For Donegal - as a community and as a local economy, our future is uncertain. We are in a time of change and transition. We need to look to our capabilities and our willingness to courageously create our own future.

Within the business community the changes and pressure to change have increased even further. International competition is forcing businesses to do businesses differently or better. Whether it is in agriculture, manufacturing, tourism or retail, the need to continuously improve competitiveness is ever present – to stand still is to chance fate.

Thankfully Donegal continues to respond to these pressures and indeed the level of entrepreneurship in the county continues to be healthy and positive. An example during the year was the very well attended Enterprising Donegal Week at the end of February to which over 1,100 businesses and individual attended some 21 separate events in the county. Likewise the quality and innovativeness of the businesses that participated and were short listed as finalists for the Business of the Year Awards gives testimony to the quality of our existing and new businesses.

If businesses are to develop then they need to continuously increase their skills and capability. This year over 380 participants and businesses took part in a range of development programmes of the Board – a clear example of the awareness among Donegal businesses of the need to improve how they do business. We were particularly delighted to have successfully piloted two new and well-received management programmes this year- Front Line Management and Innovation Leadership. We hope to offer these and other programmes again next year.

While there are uncertain times ahead for businesses there does seem to be a greater appreciation both locally and nationally of the very important role local businesses play- the Small Business Forum currently considering the needs and supports of and to the sector is a clear national sign of this. At local level, through the survey of business needs which the Board commissioned in November, we hope to be better able to address the needs of local businesses

The winners were announced by Donegal County Enterprise Board at its annual Business of the Year Awards winners at an Awards luncheon in Rathmullan House Hotel on December 2nd. Over one hundred people from the local business community were present,. Modern Timber Homes, from Bonagee in Letterkenny, was the overall winner of the Business of the Year sponsored by Donegal County Enterprise Board. Founded by Shaun McColgan in May 2004, Modern Timber Homes currently employs 19 people and provides a full service to customers from design through to on site erection of timber frame housing. It differentiates itself from its competitors through providing greater levels of service and flexibility.



Michael Tunney, CEO of Donegal County Enterprise Board with representatives of Modern Timber Homes Ltd., Overall Business Of the Year Award winners. Pictured from left are Mairead Geoghegan, Shaun McColgan and Martin Wood.

Shaun plans to launch a new turnkey product in early 2006 and has ambitious growth plans for the next two years.

A number of other awards to businesses in the county included the following;

- Business Growth Award** was presented to Mac Bride Bros. Joinery Ltd., in Convoy
- Innovation Award** was presented to James Bonner of Itronik Ltd, Letterkenny
- Entrepreneurship Award** was presented to PJ Patton of PJ Designs, Drumkeen

in the county in 2006 and beyond. We hope that we can look forward to your ongoing support and we look forward to working with you to achieve a future we all want for our county , our communities and our families.

Wishing you, your families and staff a Happy Christmas and a healthy and prosperous 2006.

Michael Tunney.

SPARK CRAFT FAIR A HUGE SUCCESS

The Donegal Craft Guild and Tyrone Craft Network wish to thank all those who came out to support them at the SPARK Christmas Craft Fair in the Radisson Hotel Letterkenny. The event was a huge success and provided local craftspeople with a platform to promote a wide range of quality handmade crafts – from glass to carved bog oak, turf and slate, from wonderfully coloured weaves to delicate precious jewellery and lustrous ceramics.

SPARK is an innovative joint cultural craft programme highlighting the work of gifted crafts people in Tyrone and Donegal.

It is being funded by Co-operation Ireland under the EU programme for Peace and Reconciliation and we have been very successful in bringing craftspeople from both counties together to learn from each other, share their knowledge and provide them with a platform to showcase their work.”



Fiona Higgins, Sioda Batik

The Foyle Hospice warmly acknowledged the receipt of admission proceeds over the weekend, which totalled almost 1500.

For further details on SPARK please contact:
Aisling Lynch alynch@donegalenterprise.ie

La Maison

- chic European homeware comes to the North West!

Letterkenny is buzzing at the moment, with so many new and exciting stores. La Maison, the town's newest and most exclusive homeware store, located on the Canal road, has all you need in kitchenware and home product, much of which have been imported from France and Germany. La Maison opened in August of this year and is the brainchild of Anne Blake and Claire McDonough who are natives of Letterkenny and Inishowen.

La Maison is the only store in Letterkenny to have a wedding gift service where the bride and groom can leave their wedding gift list and guests can then come in and pick their gifts from it. La Maison also provide a gift wrapping service so it is a purely hassle free experience!”

“The Start programme at the Donegal County Enterprise Board was really excellent and gave us a good grounding in financial, marketing and general business.” adds Anne.

La Maison stocks kitchenware, tabletop, cookwear, bedlinen, furniture, bathroom accessories, home accessories and general giftware and includes brands such as Villeroy & Boch, L'Occitane and Nigella Lawson. These products are all bought from European countries such as France, Germany and Sweden to name a few. Right now the shop has a wonderful collection of unique Christmas decorations and tableware, essential for the festive season.

A hive of activity at Bumble Bees in Donegal Town.

Bumble Bees, a new 4000 square foot state of the art play centre for kids, has just opened in Donegal Town by husband and wife team Stephen and Bridin Bell. At the official launch last week, the new centre was buzzing with all of its guests, kids and parents!

The idea was a long time in the making and the couple began planning Bumble Bees last November. Says We spent a lot of time reviewing what the best play area design would be before going ahead. We then visited the Donegal County Enterprise Board and received advice on how to set up in business and direction on developing our idea. At the time all of this information was new to me and essential to getting started.”

Bumble Bees provides a state of the art play area for children up to 12 years old and a relaxing coffee dock for adults. They also cater for birthday parties, school tours and summer camps. Plus Bumble Bee has designated parent and toddler mornings. To reward regular customers every 10th visit is free.

Contact Bumble Bees on: 074 97 25454



Stephen and Bridie Bell



Anne Blake and Clare McLaughlin Proprietors of La Maison

International Trade Opportunities Under the 'Micro'-Scope

Donegal companies take part in Tradelinks Two-Day International 'Meet the Buyer' event for Cross Border Micro Enterprise Sector

Companies from across Donegal benefited recently from an international 'Meet the Buyer' event especially designed for the micro-enterprise sector on both sides of the border. The two-day event in the Slieve Russel Hotel, Cavan, was launched jointly by Brendan Smith, TD, Department of Agriculture and Food and Bruce Robinson, Permanent Secretary, Department for Enterprise Trade and Investment.

The business networking event, using scheduled appointments with international buyers gave many smaller companies, from a variety of business sectors, their first opportunity to meet international buyers and trading partners from across the UK, Europe and North America with the potential to win meaningful business.

Under the overall Tradelinks Programme banner, a micro-enterprise development programme managed and delivered jointly by the six Border County Enterprise Boards and Enterprise Northern Ireland. This event has attracted approximately 100 buyers from the UK, Ireland, Europe and North America who met with over 150 local micro-enterprise companies in Northern Ireland and the six border counties of the Republic of Ireland over the two days to explore business opportunities.

Specific business sectors that attended the event included IT/ICT, Engineering, Environmental Products and Services, Tourism & Hospitality, Furniture, Crafts & Giftware and Food.

The Tradelinks programme is funded by the EU INTERREG IIIA programme for Ireland/Northern Ireland, the International Fund for Ireland, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and Invest NI.



Michael Tunney, Brendan Smith TD Junior Minister for Food, Jim Eastwood, Chairman of Enterprise Northern Ireland.

Bringing big business benefits to small firms

Heaney Consulting is a new Donegal based human resources consulting business offering a full range of services in human resources, training and organisational development. The business is aimed at providing practical HR support to small and medium companies who do not have dedicated HR function.

Heaney Consulting services include: recruitment; interviewing skills; employment contracts; employee handbooks; performance management; policy development; employee communication, management and staff training and much more.

Who's behind it?

Joan Heaney is a senior Human Resources practitioner with over 18 years experience in the operational practice of personnel management, training and development. She has broad industry experience in technology, manufacturing, retail, service industry and call centres for both Irish and multinational companies. She has spent the last 5 years as head of the HR function for Pramerica Systems Ireland Ltd. in Letterkenny. Heaney is an experienced trainer across a broad range of management and HR skills and is a dedicated business mentor to new and existing organisations.

Contact Details:

Heaney Consulting

Telephone: 074 9382732



Kelly Knitwear @ The Meet The Buyer Event

Enterprise in Education

The undoubted highlight of the year was the Schools Enterprise Day held in The Radisson Hotel, Letterkenny on 22nd September. The Enterprise Day was held as part of the ADM/CPA funded Let's Do Business Programme. Six hundred and fifty students and their teachers from 19 second level schools in the County turned up to hear Padraig Ó Céidigh, Managing Director of Aer Arann Express give a truly inspirational talk on leadership.

Local entrepreneurs Donna Keeney of Ballgreen, Billy McGill of Get Fresh, Michelle Morris of Morris Communications and Dean Gillespie of Gillespie Precision Engineering also presented case studies on how they developed their business ideas into commercial successes.



Padraig Ó Céidigh

The final speaker for day was Billy Dixon, international image consultant, who encouraged the students to present themselves more effectively by offering advice and coaching on interpersonal and presentation skills.

Paul McCrory then welcomed the audience to the mysterious world of the science magician where nothing was quite as it seemed - where cans roll uphill and where a vacuum cleaner became a hovercraft! This was magic with a difference - in this show the audience was encouraged to figure out the science behind the tricks.

The final speaker for day was Billy Dixon, international image consultant, who encouraged the students to present themselves more effectively by offering advice and coaching on interpersonal and presentation skills.



Finalists in the Donegal Business of the Year Awards pictured from left Mairead Geoghegan, Modern Timber Homes; Jay MacBride, MacBride Bros. Joinery; Shaun McColgan, Modern Timber Homes; Danny MacBride, MacBride Bros. Joinery; Sharon Graham, Kid Kare Creche and Playschool; John Quinn, Get Fresh; PJ Patton, PJ Designs; Tom Dooley, Aroma Caf  ; Billy McGill, Get Fresh; James Bonner, ITRONIK; Martin Wood, Modern Timber; Dean Gillespie, Gillespie Precision Engineering; and Donagh McClean, McClean Thermal Imaging.

DIT Gold Medal



Henry Mc Kinney of Inishowen Engineering recently graduated from a Postgraduate Diploma in Management Practice in DIT, this course ran as part of the Fusion programme, in co-operation with Inishowen Engineering and the University of Ulster. On graduating, He was awarded the DIT gold medal for achieving first place on the course. Professor Brian Norton, the DIT president, is pictured with Henry in the attached photo.

Internationalisation Programme

- Interested in outsourcing?
- Worried about manufacturing costs?
- Improving your distribution and transport methods?

We all know the effects of low cost economies with recent job losses. Businesses today have to cope with the fact that if products can be made cheaper elsewhere, then they need to consider how this will effect their future.

Donegal County Enterprise Board has worked with a number of companies who have gone through the process of internationalisation. It may mean importing, exporting or a combination of both. Given the experience of the Board we have decided to offer a comprehensive training course covering the following topics viz;

- Successful Outsourcing
- Financial Evaluation
- Transport
- Quality
- Project Management
- Communications
- Business Planning

All of the above will be dealt with in small, informal group-training sessions. Each business will also be allocated a mentor to work through their own specific issues. Research and an overseas visit will also be available. The Consultants hired to run to run this programme have a wealth of experience in a number of sectors.

Course starts January 2006.

For further information contact Siobhan Grant