

NEWS RELEASE: date of issue 7th April

2009 Heads of the Valleys Innovation Awards launched today

Celebrating innovation and business success

The search is on for the most innovative businesses in the Heads of the Valleys area. Businesses throughout the region are being invited to enter the Heads of the Valleys Innovation Awards which were launched on April 7 at Llancaiach Fawr Manor House in Nelson by Richie Turner, Project and Partnerships Manager for University of Wales Global Academy Innovation Programme.

The Awards celebrate and reward the most innovative businesses in the region, including social enterprises and the theme for the 2009 Awards is “Winning Through”. Businesses can gain recognition for any business activity they have implemented that has had a dramatic and beneficial impact on that business, customers, employees or the community.

Winners of the 2008 Awards were Cynon Valley Crime Reduction Services Ltd, Blaenafon Cheddar Company & Mountain Tours Ltd, Rhymney Brewery Ltd and Joyner PA (Cymru) Ltd. Tony Sheehan of Joyner PA (Cymru) summed up the excitement shared by all the winners when he said, “We were so surprised and thrilled to win the award. It means so much to us to have this recognition, particularly from our local business community. Our predecessors in the traditional industries worked hard and were highly innovative. This event proves that the innovative spirit is still very much alive.”

Entries for the 2009 Awards are open to all businesses based in any of the 5 Heads of the Valleys county boroughs and the closing date for entries is 6th June 2009. The entry process is short and simple. The Awards will be judged by a high profile panel of judges and the winners will be announced at an Awards Ceremony at the Innovation Marketplace event on 25th June 2009 at The Engine House, Dowlais.

“Innovation is crucial to business survival and growth.” said Phil Burkhard, HOVIP Manager. “These Innovation Awards recognise businesses that are already making a significant contribution to the economy of the area. We are delighted that once again the Awards have attracted prestigious and high profile sponsors.”

--more--

--continued Page 2--

The University of Wales Global Innovation Academy is the main sponsor of the Innovation Awards, as well as overall sponsor of the Marketplace event. The Global Academy initiative includes provision under the Prince of Wales Innovation Scholarships for 100 postgraduate PhD students, drawn from the best universities in the world, to work full-time (for up to 3 years) in 100 Welsh businesses.

Project and Partnerships Manager for University of Wales Global Academy - Prince of Wales Innovation Scholarships, Richie Turner said, “Our aim is to promote innovation throughout the Welsh economy; particularly private sector businesses. We are delighted to be the main sponsor of these Awards, as well as for the Innovation Marketplace event in June. HOVIP is making a difference by actively supporting businesses in the region to be more innovative. We wish all entrants every success.”

The 2009 Awards also have support from HSBC, BT, the South Wales Chamber of Commerce and Cardiff-based Capital Law, each of whom has contributed an exciting package of prizes for the winning companies. All Awards winners will also enjoy the benefit of automatically becoming members of the Turning Heads Club – HOVIP’s creative business network. ”

The 2009 Awards has 4 categories:

Most Innovative Sole Trader – sponsored by HSBC Bank plc.

Most Innovative Business with less than 20 employees – sponsored by South Wales Chamber of Commerce.

Most Innovative Business with more than 20 employees – sponsored by BT.

Most Innovative Social Enterprise Business – sponsored by Capital Law.

For further information about the 2009 Heads of the Valleys Innovation Awards, which are part of the Heads of the Valleys Innovation Programme, and to obtain an entry form, visit www.hovip.org.uk.

ENDS

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Enquiries to: Phil Burkhard, Project Manager, Heads of the Valleys Innovation Programme (HOVIP), Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council
Tel: 01685 725 469 Email: phil.burkhard@merthyr.gov.uk

1. ABOUT THE HEADS OF THE VALLEYS INNOVATION AWARDS

For an entry form and more information visit www.hovip.org.uk
or call Phil Burkhard on 01685 725 469 or email: phil.burkhard@merthyr.gov.uk



2. ABOUT HOVIP

The Heads of the Valleys Innovation Programme (HOVIP) aims to increase the capacity for innovation in businesses in the Heads of the Valleys region. HOVIP2 is a regional business development programme that is supported by the Welsh Assembly Government HoV Regeneration initiative and is hosted by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council. The five Heads of the Valleys Councils (Blaenau Gwent, Caerphilly, Merthyr Tydfil, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Torfaen) Community Enterprise Wales and NESTA comprise the HOVIP Steering Group. See www.hovip.org.uk for more information and examples of how businesses have already benefited from HOVIP.

3. ABOUT GLOBAL ACADEMY

Global Academy is a new initiative established by the University of Wales, and partners, to drive innovation and R&D in the Welsh economy. Its first programme is the Prince of Wales Innovation Scholarships is funded by the programme is part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the European Union's Convergence programme administered by the Welsh Assembly Government. See www.globalacademy.org.uk