

citybiznews

New Xtra-vision store opens

Xtra-vision has opened a new superstore in the Quays Shopping Centre in Newry.

The company has moved from its Monaghan Street base to a new spacious store at Drumalane Mill. This new store has a huge range of DVDs and blu-ray and games to rent or buy, plus a vast choice of the latest products to buy, including games consoles, music and consumer electronics such as LCD TVs, MP3/iPods, cameras, Sony eReaders, blu-ray players, sat navs, sim free phones and much more.

With plenty of parking available, popping in to pick up your favourite DVD is so easy.



The new Xtra-vision store at the Quays. 09W52N104



Purse Strings

Each week the Reporter looks at how to get the best out of your finances. Purse Strings urges beware of buying fake goods online.

With only two days of Christmas shopping left, consumers are warned about the dangers of buying dodgy goods online.

Consumerline has received an increasing number of complaints from members of the public who have bought fake goods online. The most common complaints are about GHD hair straighteners, UGG boots and jewellery, however, consumers have also reported buying a wide variety of fake goods ranging from shoes to iPods.

Fake goods are not only poorly made, but in some cases can be dangerous. To minimise the risk of purchasing counterfeit products, consumers should always ensure they buy from a reputable trader. Although a website may have a .co.uk address this does not mean the trader is based in the UK. Often sellers are based outside the European Union, making it almost impossible for effective action to be taken by the Trading Standards Service.

Consumers should always check for a postal address on a website. If there is no postal address, then the trader's location is unknown. They may even be as far away as China, making it extremely difficult to seek any form of redress if the goods purchased are in fact fake.

People should also be suspicious of bargains that seem too good to be true – especially extremely low prices of 50 per cent or less of what you would expect to pay for branded goods. If you think the price is too good to be true, then it probably is.

Exercise extreme caution if you are making purchases from a relatively new website especially if prices are low and website requests pre-payment. Negative feedback or comments from other consumers often acts as a warning sign and there may be good reason to be guarded.

If in doubt use the 'Ask Howard' search facility on the European Consumer Centre website (<http://www.ukecc.net>) to research a website.

Businesses warned not to rely on southern shoppers

By Heather Simpson



John MacMahon, Chairman of Newry and Mourne Co-operative has warned business will have to reinvent to survive in the current economic climate. 09W49N151

Businesses in Newry and Mourne will have to "reinvent" and become less dependent on the euro rush of southern shoppers, according to the chairman of Newry and Mourne Co-operative.

The strength of the Euro has seen a deluge of southerners travel Newry-bound to stock up on food and alcohol.

John MacMahon told Newry and Mourne Co-operative AGM that although Newry's retail sector has benefited from the differences in fiscal regime between the North and South, the financial crisis in the Republic will have an impact on other areas of the economy.

He warned over-dependence on any one sector is dangerous in the long term and as a result businesses in Newry and Mourne are going to

have to become less reliant on north/south trade and find new overseas markets.

"For other parts of our economy which were so reliant on the market for goods and labour south of the border, the collapse in the Republic's economy has been a disaster," he said.

"The buying power of the State and of citizens in the Republic will be a fraction of what it was for years to come. So long as the Euro stays strong and the cost of living there high, inward investment will be harder not just to attract but to retain. The foreign-owned manufacturing and tradable services sectors in the Republic may not in the future be the important market for our goods and labour they once were."

More new businesses are going to have to be created to replace lost jobs and young people are going to have to look towards self-employment rather than moving overseas or taking public sector jobs.

"The more businesses we can create from our resource of young, skilled, highly educated and

hardworking people the more employment we can create to counter the contraction in construction and the reduction in public sector employment and the less dependent we will be on the retail industry," he said.

With this in mind, Newry and Mourne Co-operative based in the WIN Business Park is home to a microcosm of 72 businesses across sectors as diverse as food processing, engineering, customer handling, business services, information and computer technology, employing 400 people.

The Co-operative in the Newry and Mourne Enterprise Agency worked hard last year to help many people to start-up in business despite the harsh economic conditions. They have worked with necessity entrepreneurs whose self-employment is their only option for survival, as well as those already in business to help them towards success.

"Our route map is clear – we will work to create work and prosperity in Newry and Mourne," he said.

PhD graduate lands e-business post

University can be a life changing experience for some students and that was certainly the case for Hilltown mum, Mary Boyd.



Mary Boyd. 09W52N106

The Inland Revenue Officer enrolled in a part-time degree course at the University of Ulster eight years ago, with the dream of one day becoming a lecturer.

Last week she graduated with a doctorate in e-business and small companies from Ulster's Coleraine campus.

Dr Boyd has already landed a business strategy lecturing post in the Department of Marketing, Entrepreneurship and Strategy at Jordanstown. "It's been a really brilliant time for me I passed my PhD

exams in September and then I started working here the same week and I love it," she said.

"To get this after eight years of hard work makes it all worth it - I've ended up in my dream job."

"I was 37-years-old when I started my degree part-time while I worked full-time. At that time some people said to me 'are you sure this is what you want to do?' I had a good job in the Inland Revenue, but I knew there was something more I could be doing with my life."

After completing her business degree Dr Boyd won a PhD scholarship which meant she could study full-time.

"When I finished my degree I knew I wanted to continue studying. As a PhD student you also get the opportunity to teach and I took on whatever teaching was offered. I taught a lot of e-business in

Coleraine and then last year I was offered part-time posts."

"I knew as soon as I started lecturing that this was what I should be doing with my life and I said, by the time I'm 45 I'd like to be lecturing and now I am."

Dr Boyd, who now lives in Whiteabbey with her teenage son, Peadar, added, "Going to university has been a great learning experience in every aspect of my life, I'm much more confident than I was five years ago. Completing my degree and PhD has given me a great sense of achievement."

Dr Boyd recently had a paper published in the Management Decisions journal based on her PhD research, 'E-business developments within small and medium sized manufacturing enterprises in Ireland'.

The Price is Right

Come on down! Higher or lower, oil and petrol prices are forever fluctuating. The Newry Reporter's weekly price watch looks at how much you are paying at the pumps and the cost of filling your oil tank. Survey taken on Monday, December 21.

AVERAGE PUMP PRICE PER LITRE				AVERAGE OIL PRICES			NATURAL GAS –	
PETROL		DIESEL		300 litres	500 litres	900 litres	Average December Oil Price – 3.95p	Firmus Energy Natural Gas (based on three bed semi) 3.20 p/k Wh (20 per cent cheaper than oil)
Cheapest	Dearest	Cheapest	Dearest	Newry	internet	Northern Ireland		
Newry (pence)	109.9	111.9	109.9	112.9	£137	£212.79	£364.61	
Banbridge (pence)	107.9	109.9	108.9	111.9	£146.01	£206.13	£363.96	
Dundalk (cents)	116.9	124.9	101.9	116.9	£143.43	£211.46	£363.41	