



Principal David Cunningham and staff of Killeel High school are presented with the Mark of Excellence award from Wendy Austin, journalist and broadcaster, at the NI Quality Awards. R1105128



Julie Gibbons, Autoline Insurance group is presented with the Gold STEPS award at the NI Quality Awards from Patrick Loughrey CEO, Forward Emphasis and Richard Pengelly, public spending director, Department of Finance and Personnel. R1106107

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Excellence Awards night

Autoline Insurance Group and Killeel High school were honoured at the Northern Ireland Quality Awards, which took place in the Ramada hotel, Belfast.

Autoline, with an office in Newry picked up a 'Steps to Excellence - Gold' Award. The Northern Ireland Quality Awards scheme is organised and managed by the Centre for Competitiveness. Presenting the Northern Ireland Steps to Excellence

Gold Award to Autoline Insurance Group, Patrick Loughrey CEO, Forward Emphasis said: "It is particularly pertinent at this time of economic difficulty for local companies to be ambitious and demonstrate a strong entrepreneurial spirit. By maintaining a focus on quality we hope that homegrown companies like Autoline will continue to grow, provide employment and prosper."

Killeel High school picked up the Mark of Excellence award at the event. The school was commended for its excellent teamwork and hard work.

New Chairman

Newry and Mourne Co-operative and Enterprise Agency, the body that manages the very successful business parks at WIN in Newry, Flurrybridge, Warrenpoint, Killeel and Forkhill and which has helped 1,400 new businesses in Newry and Mourne to start-up since 2000 has a new chairman, Peter McEvoy.

Peter has been a director of the 'Co-op', which is a registered Charity, since the 1970s. He was one of the civic leaders who pioneered a number of community-led actions to tackle endemic unemployment and economic under-development in the Newry and Mourne area, initiatives which as well as contributing enormously to the regeneration of the area and ultimately to the relative prosperity which most people today enjoy, has also influenced Government policy across Ireland and in Britain. Peter lives in Newry, is married to Marie and has two sons and five daughters.

Handing over the baton to Peter was John MacMahon who chaired the Co-op for 16 years from 1994 during which time the organisation greatly increased its provision of affordable workspace for local small business in the district, doubling the size of WIN Business Park and Warrenpoint Enterprise Centre and leading the establishment of new business parks at Flurrybridge in south Armagh and Killeel as well as playing a significant role in the development of Crossmaglen Enterprise Centre and managing the Forkhill Enterprise Centre.

In his statement to the Co-op's members, volunteers and a range of local stakeholders at the organisation's recent AGM, John MacMahon said that it had been



New chairman, Peter McEvoy. R1106145

a privilege to be chairman of such an influential organisation and to have contributed to the Newry and Mourne area's development. He noted that during the past year all five of the enterprise centres and business parks which the Enterprise Agency managed were more than 95 per cent occupied at a time when many other facilities were struggling with closures. This was attributable, he said, to the policy of offering good value and a quality supportive environment. There was also no doubt, he added, that a crucial factor had been the success of the organisation's staff in attracting tenants and thereafter helping them to stay viable and in many cases to expand. This was the model which the Co-operative had pioneered at WIN in Newry and which had been adopted across Northern Ireland and in many parts of the European Union: workspace supported by business advice professionals whose primary objective is to develop local businesses for the benefit of the local area.

Mr MacMahon said that the Co-op had never lost its sense of purpose, not in the dark days when

almost a third of the working age population in the district had been unemployed; and it would not do so now. It was now working with other stakeholders in Newry and Mourne to pool resources for the benefit of local people.

He said that the Co-operative had been active in promoting cross-border trade and co-operation for many years. With the economic crash in the South the prospect for inter-trade between the two jurisdictions on the island seemed bleak and yet the "Tradelinks" programme managed by the organisation had been more active than ever helping 16 local businesses in the last year to develop new markets south of the border. Mr MacMahon concluded by saying that it was a time across Ireland for the true meaning of citizenship to be rediscovered. It was a time for people, particularly those in business, to adopt for the long term those principles on which the Co-op and the Credit Union movement had been founded and which remained at the heart of their strategies. The betterment of the community was their common purpose not profit-maximisation. It was now widely acknowledged, he said, if unfortunately belatedly that the obsessive pursuit of profit, particularly by banks, feeding on a rising tide of greed and selfishness in society, had led to the demise of the "Celtic Tiger". New chairman, Peter McEvoy, said that he wanted to work with his fellow voluntary directors and the organisation's highly competent team of advisers led by Dr Conor Patterson, to help ensure that Newry and Mourne came through the recession with a stronger, more competitive economy and as a better place to live and visit.