

BUSINESSES SHINE AT STAR AWARDS

A family-owned convenience shop chain has been named Perthshire's top business.

David Sands lifted the Perthshire Chamber of Commerce 2010 Business Of The Year title at a glittering Business Star Awards ceremony in Crieff.

Delighted staff from the 163-year-old business cheered as the company secured the Business In The Community category award before going on to claim the overall title.

Around 300 guests heard how David Sands captured the judges' vote for its activities in the communities where it has a presence.

The company currently operates 29 licensed convenience stores throughout Perthshire and Fife, employing around 700 people.

Perthshire Chamber of Commerce President Paul Shields said: "Through their presence, their service and their support to all age groups - which is vital in many areas - they have prompted national thinking, provoking the Scottish Government to adopt nationally the challenge to tackle underage and binge drinking.

"Their outstanding professional approach at all levels of business sets them apart and makes them worthy winners of the 2010 title."

Mr Shields made three special President's awards for contributions to the business community which went to Provost John and Lady Provost Sara Hulbert, Highland Spring, and Caithness Glass head designer Sarah Peterson.

Nine Category award winners all secured a bespoke piece of Sarah Peterson glassware which combined the essence of the Perth 800 logo with the Chamber's recognisable Star Award profile.

Chamber Chief Executive, Vicki Unite, said: "We are always amazed at the high standard of entries and this year was no exception. The standard continues to improve year on year and we were delighted to see this continue during such challenging times.

"It was a fabulous night and it was great to see the whole business community get together to celebrate this year's top achievers. The best part of the event is that we know from experience that there can be a real business benefit for winners - and finalists - and that is the underlying reason for our Star Awards."

Other top business titles at Friday evening's ceremony went to:

Employee of the Year Award

Alan Berwick, the New County Hotel
Highly Commended, Liz Aird, Loch Leven's Larder

Stagecoach Group New Business Award

Le Tricycle

Highland Spring Customer Service Award

Cherrybank Dental Spa

A&J Stephen (Builders) Ltd Training & Development Award

Live Active Leisure

Symphony Hotels & Leisure Retail Award

Loch Leven's Larder

Bank of Scotland Creative Award

Highland Spring Group

Royal Bank of Scotland Tourism & Hospitality Award

Loch Leven's Larder

A & S Properties Marketing Award

Binn Skips
Highly Commended, Rubesa Coffee

Clydesdale Bank Business in the Community Award

David Sands
Highly Commended, PKAVS

This year's glittering awards ceremony was held at Crieff Hydro Hotel and was hosted by Radio Tay's Gary Robinson and Maureen Young with entertainment by Scotland's top classical trio R3 Tenors.

Musical entertainment during a pre-dinner drinks reception was provided by Morrison's Academy seven piece acoustic jazz band "Band of Substance" which got the evening off to a swinging start.

Guests enjoyed a sumptuous dinner with wine and once again Highland Spring provided the water for the evening and The Famous Grouse Experience donated whisky miniatures to round off the feast.

Sound and light production and expertise for the show were provided by Catalyst EPS.

Filming of finalists and on the night was provided by Johnston Media.

A total of £2000 was raised for The Lotus Trust a registered children's charity supported by local business W2 Training - through a fun-filled Heads And Tails competition. A dinner, bed and breakfast weekend for two package was the prize kindly donated by Stephen Leckie of Crieff Hydro Hotel.

Spectacular floral arrangements for the evening were donated by Williamson Design Florist and guests were provided with a free return coach journey by Parmigan Solutions with others opting to party into the wee small hours with AIB Entertainments.



Paul Shields with Perthshire Business of the Year Award winner David Sands

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Stagecoach Group New Business Award – Le Tricycle

Le Tricycle offers a visually nostalgic treat, serving traditional Perthshire ice-cream and confectionary, presented with panache.

The business is based around a traditional 1920's ice-cream tricycle, complete with eye-catching green livery, bell and basket, which offers locally produced and beautifully presented products.

Operating in Larghan Victory Park in Coupar Angus, Le Tricycle also peddles along to weddings, parties and events throughout Perthshire.

The judges commented that Le Tricycle is an inspiring example to anyone considering setting up in business: if you have an innovative offer that fills a gap in the market and are prepared to take the plunge, you can make your idea a reality.



Stagecoach New Business of the Year Award. Steven Stewart presents the award to winner Gwenda Mingos of Le Tricycle

Highland Spring Customer Service Award – Cherrybank Dental Spa



Highland Spring Customer Service Award. Chris Livingstone presents the award to winner Elaine Halley of Cherrybank Dental Spa

Cherrybank Dental Spa is proud to provide the greatest comfort for their general and cosmetic dentistry patients at their modern Perth and Edinburgh practices which are equipped with the latest technology.

Dr Halley and her team aim to help you achieve the beautiful smile you've always wanted, while ensuring that your teeth and gums stay healthy for a lifetime.

Customer focus is described as being 'the absolute core' of the Cherrybank Dental Practice and their Customer Service Policy is based around the team's mission to exceed expectations.

The judges felt that Cherrybank Dental Spa provided an exceptional level of customer care going well beyond the norm that you would associate with this profession. Indeed, the customer service and customer care could only describe as an industry leading, with this being a shining example for others in the profession to aspire to.

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A&J Stephen (Builders) Ltd Training & Development – Live Action Leisure

Live Active Leisure provides leisure and sports facilities across Perthshire, as well as specialist management, development and operation services across a range of areas.

These facilities provide particular value in terms of the quality of life currently available to residents and visitors to the Perth and Kinross area.

The company recognises the need for significant investment towards staff training and development, to ensure they have the ability and skills to effectively fulfil their roles.

During 2009/10 Live Active Leisure provided 5200 hours of training coverage over 180 subject matters.

The judges were impressed at the commitment, vision, leadership and enthusiasm that persuaded them that they are worthy winners of this category.



A&J Stephens Training and Development Award. John Stephen (left) presents the award to winners Live Active Leisure from left, Diane Gaffney, Tricia Stewart, Jim Moyes and Gary McClean

Symphony Hotels & Leisure Retail Award – Loch Leven's Larder



Symphony Hotels and Leisure Retail Award. Mike Sheffield presents the award to winner Emma Niven from Loch Leven's Larder

In 2002 Robin and Emma Niven began farming at Channel and Pittendreich farms, growing vegetables for supermarkets. Loch Leven's Larder was partly born out of their frustration at the lack of locally grown produce available in the shops.

The food hall and delicatessen specialises in an extensive range of local and Scottish produce while the cafés offer both table and self service. The gift shop combines an eclectic mix of contemporary giftware with quality European ranges.

Loch Leven's Larder highlight their passion to promote Perthshire and Scotland year round while embracing an ethos of local seasonality and provenance.

What made Loch Leven's Larder stand out as a winner to the judging panel was the personal attention made by Emma Niven in respect of lighting, unusual displays and her dedication to get her staff team as enthusiastic about the business as she is.