



October 2009

## October Newsletter

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Dear Mark,

Welcome to the October edition of the Chamber newsletter. In this month's edition we have updated you with our latest news and how you can get involved as well as features from fellow members.

This monthly email features all of the Chamber's latest news, events and offers and copy for inclusion should be sent to [Doreen Parkhill](#) by the 15th of each month.

We are also offering a valuable opportunity to advertise your business via the newsletter, costs from £50 per edition. For more information on this or any other Chamber enquiry email [Doreen Parkhill](#) or phone 01750 505059.

### Scottish Borders Chamber News

#### Transport - What do you think?

Scottish Chambers of Commerce is the national network owned by the local Chambers of Commerce. At a recent Council Meeting it was suggested that the biggest challenge for businesses was Transport. We know that a great deal needs to be done to make Scotland's transport infrastructure fit for the twenty-first century. The difficulty is two fold - how do we fund it and what are the priorities? Naturally people tend to favour improvements which will benefit themselves and their locality and businesses. What do you think? Email your views in confidence to [Graham Bell](#) and this will help us shape our contribution to the SCC 'Manifesto' for the next election. If you feel strongly about any other aspects of policy and have creative ideas about how things could be done differently then Graham would be pleased to hear from you.

#### Lets make Scottish Borders businesses really count

The Scottish Borders Chamber has given permission for its Members to be asked to contribute to the Quarterly Economic Survey. This is Scotland's most prestigious economic analysis - partly because of the number of respondents it has attracted over many years. Your information is secure and will be used for no other purpose than to ask you if you wish to engage in the survey which is conducted by the Fraser of Allander Institute based at Strathclyde University. Confidentiality is governed and assured by their university statutes. If enough Border businesses respond we will (on top of contributing to national statistics) get an up-to the minute snapshot of how local businesses are faring and what they think of future prospects. For further information email [Graham Bell](#).

### Big Lottery Fund - Scotland and the private sector

Around a dozen Members and Chamber representatives attended this meeting which was facilitated by Liz Cameron, CEO Scottish Chambers of Commerce and a Vice-Chair of the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland.

We mainly heard from Director Dharmendra Kanani and Senior Policy Manager, Eric Samuels, who explained how lottery funding is derived and learned about their remit and rule base. The meeting concluded with a short Q&A and some comments from the assembled company. Key points were:

- The Big Lottery Fund in Scotland will have £300m to dispense over the next six years, or roughly £1m per week.
- This must be done without competing with the Private Sector.
- The responsible Westminster Minister is currently Ben Bradshaw, but it is clear that how funds are dispersed is a decision made by to the local Board.

The remit of the fund is: "To bring real improvements to communities and to the lives of people most in need."

Funds can be dispersed as:

1. Grants
2. Loans (although this has not yet been done)
3. Trusts
4. Contracts

A new concept which has been successfully trialed is to "invest in ideas." This is effectively funding for test marketing. For example a project likely to pan out at a quarter of a million pounds total might be awarded ten thousand pounds to trial a better proof of concept than is possible merely from a written proposal.

The four main targets are:

1. Supporting Life Transitions
2. Supporting 21st Century Life / Planning for the Future
3. Growing community assets / achieving community ownership of local assets
4. Dynamic Inclusive Communities

It was stressed that businesses are themselves eligible to apply for funding provided the application meets the fund's criteria. So for example a firm might choose to run an adult literacy / numeracy or life skills programme for inward young employees, taking part of the working week to provide this training. Costs of the courses might be eligible for funding. Similarly a company might engage in some partnership with its local community around environmental enhancement, or safety and be eligible.

**IN SUMMARY** - It was stressed that the fund is "not about giving grants" but is about "intelligent funding." As such it seeks real partnerships where, employability, skills acquisition and the development of community assets might well make businesses ideal partners.

## What does innovation mean to you?

What is your perception of Innovation? Scientists in white coats? University boffins? Test tubes and science fiction? These are vital but business innovation is about a lot more than that. Innovation is how we transform the things we do, how we make more from the services we offer and how we improve the things we make.

Businesses that continually create, evaluate and exploit their new ideas are the most likely to survive and prosper in today's intensely competitive global economy. This couldn't be more important than right now. In an economic downturn, change through innovation is precisely what benefits a business-making it more efficient, more profitable and more successful. Now, more than ever businesses are focusing on survival and how to position themselves to take advantage of new opportunities as the economy recovers.

Scottish Enterprise aim to be valuable allies in this process. There are huge opportunities for Scotland- and on a wider business front than you might first imagine. Innovation is about:

- Introducing new products and modifying existing ones.
- Improving management and production process to raise efficiency or reduce costs.
- Adding value and profit for customers with new ways to deliver products and services.
- Transforming business models to improve competitiveness.
- Exploiting the opportunities in a low carbon economy.

Scottish Enterprise aim to support businesses exploit these opportunities. To find out more please email [Ken Green](mailto:Ken.Green@scottishenterprise.gov.uk), Innovation Advisor for the South of Scotland, Scottish Enterprise.

## **Chamber Events**

For more information on Chamber events contact [Doreen Parkhill](mailto:Doreen.Parkhill@scottishenterprise.gov.uk).

### **Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce AGM**

Date - Thursday 8 October

Venue - Abbotsford House, Melrose

Time - 8am - 10am  
 Guest Speaker - Andrew Douglas-Home

### **Bank of England BMW Joint Networking Lunch**

Date - Wednesday 21 October  
 Time - 12 - 2pm  
 Venue - Dalhousie Castle  
 Cost - £10 Members and £20 Non Members

### **Procurement Workshop**

Many members attended the recent Procurement Workshop run by Scottish Borders Council. As well as being an excellent networking opportunity the event also gave a detailed insight into how Borders companies can achieve public sector contracts throughout Scotland and the rest of the UK. Scottish Borders Council will be holding more of these events, for more information email [Lesley Kelso](mailto:Lesley.Kelso@scottishborders.gov.uk) or telephone 01835 826727.

### **Test drive winner**

Congratulations to Tracy Roxburgh from Berwickshire Housing Association who won last months Chamber competition to test drive a brand new Seat for the weekend. If your company would like to offer a prize for the Newsletter please get in touch with [Doreen Parkhill](mailto:Doreen.Parkhill@scottishborders.gov.uk).

### **New Members**

The Chamber warmly welcomes its new Members and this month showcases GYP Borders. New Members - GYP Borders, Aquarius Hair Design, [Purves Chartered Accountants](#), [Kelso Kilts](#), Tweed Chiropractic Clinic, The Test Purchase Company, Port Brae Wealth Management.

### **GYP Borders - Giving Young People & Families Support**

GYP Borders works with vulnerable young people "at risk"; or with additional support needs aged 10-18 years who particularly struggle with everyday situations, especially if their support structure has broken down. These young people can feel alienated with a sense of hopelessness that can lead to an increased risk of dropping out of school and becoming involved in offending and anti-social behavior which can result in social isolation.

We offer these young people the opportunity to participate in one of our three diverse, innovative projects empowering them to make positive choices towards achieving their full potential:

1. **Alternative Routes learning skills for life** - a range programmes addresses the various issues, delivered by qualified project workers on a 1:1 basis and group work basis.
2. **"Stable Life" horse therapy** - teaches and challenges participants to focus, learn new skills, increase confidence, contribute, take responsibility, and improve self-control and discipline.
3. **Chance 4 Change befriending/mentoring** - an adult volunteer befriender will offer a stable relationship, encourage social skills and help build self esteem.

We are a Company Limited by Guarantee run by a Board of Directors.

### **Turning recession into success**

A Borders company is tackling the recession head on with a unique strategy that is not only allowing the business to continue to grow but is quickly establishing the company as one of the country's leading recruitment agencies.

Founded in 2003 by entrepreneurs Eileen and Iain Pheasant, [Reiver Business Services](#) has historically focused on providing permanent and temporary staff for the office recruitment market, however current economic conditions sparked a re think of the strategy resulting in a new focus on the industrial sector. The philosophy is clearly working for the Galashiels based business with a year on year increase in turnover and two prestigious industry accreditations already secured and an expansion programme now on the cards.

"If you want to stay competitive it is absolutely critical that you continually review your business offer and look for ways to stay ahead of the competition," explains Managing Director, Eileen Pheasant. "We have been working closely with the team at Business Gateway and as a result we have now developed a range of new industrial recruitment packages which are proving extremely

successful in helping a range of companies recruit production staff."

With the help of a specialist business adviser from Business Gateway, Reiver Business Services has also secured two prestigious industry accreditations ISO 9001:2008 and ISO 14001:2004. The awards are internationally recognised with only a handful of recruitment companies in Scotland holding both accreditations.

"The awards recognise quality and environmental commitment, and underline our continued drive to provide the highest levels of customer care," adds Eileen. "We have always been focused on providing a personal service to all our clients and the strategy would appear to be paying off."

To move the company to the next business level, Eileen and Iain are now working on a feasibility study to examine a geographical expansion of the business over the next few years.

Throughout their journey, Eileen and Iain have acknowledged the importance of a good support network and the power of working in partnership. In addition to the support they have had from the team at Business Gateway, the two entrepreneurs have also recently set up a partnership with four other national recruitment agencies to bid for contracts through the Government's Procurement Scotland programme.

### **Biggest crane in the Borders**

[Rodger the Builders of Earlston](#), one of the oldest building and civil engineering companies in Scotland have just completed the purchase of their latest crane. With the capacity to lift 100 tones and with a boom length of 50 meters and an additional 19 meters of fly jib this crane has the biggest capacity of any in the Scottish Borders. Two operators have had familiarisation training over the past week and already it has been in operation in Tweedbank and at



Newcastleton. Weighing in at 64 tons on four axles it is the most compact crane in its class and one that Rodgers feel will find a ready market at home in the Borders and further afield. A director of the company, Willie Rodger, said that while the effects of the current recession were undoubtedly having an impact on current workloads, it was important to continue to invest in new plant and equipment to maintain their position as the pre-eminent crane operator in the region and to offer a service not otherwise available to their customers in the area. The recession will not last indefinitely and we have to be ready for the upturn when it comes. Their customers further afield have a wider choice of supplier and to compete in the market you must provide state of the art plant and equipment. Being based in Earlston means that local customers don't have to pay for cranes running down from Edinburgh to their job thereby saving about three hours of hire time. Rodger (Builders) Ltd offer a full range of services to compliment their fleet of cranes with operators trained to the highest industry standards.

The Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce - A National Voice for Local Business

Kind regards,

*Doreen Parkhill*  
Member Support

[Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce](#)

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some much needed sparkle this year?

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...from only £55 per person inclusive of Party Night and accommodation on a B&B basis \*\*

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\*\*Subject to terms and conditions.



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Scottish Borders Chamber of Commerce | Unit 128 | Ettrick Riverside | Dunsdale Road | Selkirk | TD7 5EB | United Kingdom