

First words

Welcome to the summer edition of Business Direction.

The election seems a distant memory, but the impact of a coalition and the decisions made to reduce the deficit will be seen over the coming months and years.

From a Chamber point of view, this edition features the winners of our awards held at West Midland Safari Park. Thanks to Ivan and his team, and what a wonderful conference venue has been created at West Midland Safari Park – well done Ivan.

The winners of the business of the year, Webbs of Wychbold have been a flagship company in our area for many years; their business goes from strength to strength, through acquisitions and innovation. Well done to Boyd and Ed – my two main contacts at Webbs and obviously all the staff who have contributed to its success. Good news also for Chase Distillery Limited who earlier this year had their Chase Vodka voted best Vodka in the world. William Chase seems very capable at creating and developing quality products at his base in Little Marcle,

Herefordshire.

We are now well and truly in the awards season and it is important for companies to celebrate their success and maximise publicity for their company through such processes. One further opportunity to do this is the Midlands Business Awards 2011, which will be held in January. However, the closing date for entries is Tuesday 31 August 2010 and categories can be found on www.midlandsbusinessawards.com. Last year we had very little representation from Herefordshire and Worcestershire and we really need to celebrate our range of businesses by challenging for these regional awards.

Redditch Borough Council has been working very hard with us over the last year to support businesses in their area. To this end we organised an international trade event, which has resulted in 6 companies expanding to new markets or exporting for the first time. In addition we hosted a Redditch Business Expo which attracted approximately 150 people and on the 16 July we are organising an Olympic Event to assist local businesses to win contracts related to the 2012 Olympic Games.

The Worcester Expo, probably our largest event of the year will be held at University of Worcester on Thursday 9 September.

We have just started taking stand bookings for this event and although we are hoping for 150 exhibitors I urge you to book early as places are going quickly. Please contact our events team on 0845 641 1641 for more information.

As a Chamber of Commerce, we are very keen to expand our relationships with other countries. One of our member companies Principia and INBI in Mainz, Germany and the Chamber have a new relationship relating to student placements and exchange of good practice. Following on from a visit late last year from Blount County Chamber, East Tennessee, Eric Brown, Director of International Trade is currently working on a project which will include links to Malvern Hills Science Park, Central Technology Belt and also defence capability companies across the West Midlands.

Gary Woodman, the Chambers' Policy and Education Manager is organising a visit to the European Parliament in Brussels on Wednesday 13 October 2010 – Thursday 14 October 2010 to meet with MEPs and key decision makers in Brussels. This is an excellent opportunity to get your voice heard; whether you trade in Europe, have a specific business issue or just want to find out more about your



representation in Europe.

Finally on a sad note, the Chamber has lost one of its closest friends and allies in Geoff Palmer of Worcestershire County Council who passed away on Tuesday 25 May. Geoff was a great supporter of business in Worcestershire and beyond and has played a key role in developing and taking ideas forward. We will miss him, thanks Geoff.

Mike Ashton, Chief Executive
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Expert Exchange Programme

German internships supporting local businesses

Principia School of Language Ltd have secured a three-year contract to place graduates from Germany in local companies on 8-week internships. The students, all study at the Institute for the Advancement of Education and Integration (INBI) in Mainz. With the help of Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce, all eight students secured places at a variety of organisations including; the University of Worcester, Concern Universal, Supercool Design, Headway and three at the Chamber's Head Office in Worcester.

Jenny Holland, Advocacy Project Coordinator at Concern Universal said: "We were delighted to be offered an intern for a few months; such valuable voluntary support makes our work with people living in poverty so much more efficient and effective. "Stefanie has been able to support the work we are doing at the Hay Festival and has brought her skills, previous experience and enthusiasm with her, adding richly to our work."

The project's funding comes from four sources: Mainz City Council, the state of Rhineland-Palatinate, the



The Chamber's German interns on their penultimate day at the awards.

University of Mainz and the Federal Department of Employment. The funding covers the graduates' flights to and from the UK, accommodation in host families; travel to and from work, excursions. For the employers there are no financial implications, so it has been a win-win situation for all involved in the project.

As part of the contract 8 experts in the fields of employment and integration from Mainz spent 4 days in Worcester attending a highly successful conference organised by the Chamber, which included visits to Worcester Sixth Form College, the University of Worcester, Malvern Science Park, Dytecna, S&A Produce (Leominster) and the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce. A reciprocal visit to Mainz took place in June,

with Chamber Chief Executive Mike Ashton.

Principia Director, Peter Corbishley commented: "This has been a very special project for me, linking Mainz, a city I know so well through exchanges when I was at the Sixth Form College, with Worcester. I still cannot believe how much support we have received from the Chamber. I'll always be so grateful to Mike Ashton for his personal involvement in the project and for saying 'yes' when everyone we had approached turned us down."

For information about the 10-12 graduates from Mainz, who will be in Worcester from mid-October for 8-week internships, or about hosting, contact Principia on 01386 554650 or e-mail info@principia.eu.com