



A section of the forest is completely transformed by the skilful use of lighting.

Forest event brings sparkle to economy

ALTHOUGH THE entire country is in the grips of an economic downturn, the Enchanted Forest event is bringing a seven-figure boost to Pitlochry.

The annual light show in Faskally Wood has sold around 17,000 tickets this year and, along with income from people visiting the Autumn Festival, it is thought the event will bring in £1 million.

The show is in its seventh year, and has gone from strength to strength, with numbers attending rising from 3000 in its infancy to many thousands today.

It has also been shortlisted for two Perth Chamber of Commerce Business Star awards in the tourism and creative categories.

Organiser Hamish Murray said, "With an event like this, it's great to have our efforts recognised. But we are not in it for the awards, we just want to get people outside and enjoying the forests."

"Tickets have been flying out the door and we are 26% up on

sales compared to the same period last year, and it looks like we will sell out."

With the economy and environment at the forefront of most people's minds, this year's Enchanted Forest has cut down on the amount of electricity used.

LED lights have been brought in, as they are stronger and use less power, enabling the number of generators used to be cut from four to two.

Only one generator is actually used to power the show, using only 40% of its capacity, with the second being kept only as a backup in case of mishap.

People attending shows are also encouraged to use public transport, and there are regular shuttle buses between Pitlochry and Faskally Wood to cut down on traffic congestion.

Despite the importance of the event for the area, a core group of only six people work on it, with outside help from the Forestry Commission, Perth and Kinross

Council, VisitScotland, Perth and Kinross Countryside Trust and Scottish Enterprise Tayside.

They have also brought in new ways to promote the event, and this year advertised on trains and in train stations throughout Scotland for the first time.

Mr Murray said, "We have been advertising on our website and through press releases, but we have found that word of mouth is by far the best way."

"VisitScotland promote it through their various mediums, and the Forestry Commission and Perth and Kinross Council are also getting the word out."

"Slowly but surely more people are hearing about the Enchanted Forest, and around 30-40% of tickets sold are people coming on a repeat visit, meaning that the remainder are all new customers."

The Enchanted Forest will run until Sunday, November 2, and more information can be found at www.enchantedforest.org.uk



Another view of the Enchanted Forest.

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