

NEWS

Who will be in the business finals?

Gordon Bannerman

THE race for the prestigious Perthshire Chamber of Commerce Business Star Awards 2008 is hotting up as judges shortlist the cream of the candidates from this year's bumper entry.

Businesses from all over Perth and accolades, but with their eye firmly fixed on the coveted Bank of Scotland sponsored overall Business Of The Year 2008 title and trophy.

And all will be revealed at the Chamber's glittering, black tie awards dinner at Crieff Hydro Hotel on Thursday, November 20.

As judges begin interviewing the shortlisted finalists, Chamber business manager Vicki Unite said they faced an almost impossible task to select winners from the high quality entrants.

"The range and quality of entrant for the awards is very impressive indeed," she said. "We now have our shortlists and the hard work begins as the judges try to find one business in each category that stands out against the others."



PERTSHIRE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

"Perthshire Chamber of Commerce Star Awards are recognised as an indicator of business excellence and this year's competition has attracted both urban and rural businesses, large and small, new and established," added Ms Unite. "We're looking forward to seeing who reaches their goal next month and rewarding their achievements."

And this year the winners can look forward to securing a fabulous new handcrafted Star Awards trophy designed, created and gifted by glassware experts Caithness Glass.

David Fleming, Tayside area director with Bank of Scotland Corporate, said they were "delighted" to be key sponsors for another year in what has become a major event for local businesses.

"The Star Awards celebrate those who've made the very most of opportunities they've spotted even in these tumultuous market conditions," he said. "The awards applaud those with vision, sound business sense and - above all - entrepreneurial drive and passion."

"We firmly believe that it's vital that such passion and drive is recognised and rewarded and we're proud to be sponsoring this celebration of the strength and promise in Perth and Kinross."

Ms Unite also paid tribute to the many businesses who have provided category and support sponsorship to help recognise the area's outstanding professionals.

"Without the support of the Bank of Scotland and all our other sponsors this outstanding event simply couldn't happen," she said. "The generosity of numerous businesses has allowed us to recognise and reward the outstanding achievements of others."

The businesses shortlisted for this year's awards are:
Perth College New Business Award - Shopping Centre.

Blown Away Land Yachts; Alex Cairncross; Kcoco; Tee Deal Highland Spring Customer Service Award - Easy Heat Ltd; The Famous Grouse Experience; Something Special Flowers
A & J Stephen (Builders) Ltd Training and Development Award - Easy Heat Ltd; The Famous Grouse Experience; Horsecross

Speakeasy Productions
Symphony Hotels and Leisure Ltd Retail Award - Alex Cairncross; The Famous Grouse Experience; Legends Coffee House

Perth & Kinross Council (Economic Development) Creative Award - Enchanted Forest; Perth College; Speakeasy Productions
VisitScotland Tourism and Hospitality Award - Enchanted Forest; Highland Adventure Safaris; Horsecross
Maclellan I.T. Marketing Award - Castlecroft Securities Ltd; Lorraine Law; Millard Consulting

Norwich Union/Aviva Business in the Community Award - Fairfield Housing; Horsecross; Lorraine Law; St John's Shopping Centre.

COURT CASEBOOK

Messages of abuse

A PERTH woman left a series of voice messages on her former friend's phone after discovering that she had divulged confidential information about her to other people.

The incidents cost Jennifer Spark (32), of Brahan Terrace, fines totalling £300 when she appeared for sentence at Perth Sheriff Court on Wednesday.

Spark pled guilty to repeatedly leaving abusive messages on the female's phone on February 8.

She also admitted breaching a bail condition, ordering not to communicate in any way with her.

But she repeatedly contacted her, leaving offensive and abusive messages.

Depute fiscal Robbie Brown said the first message was "slightly strange" and stated: "You don't suit your hair blond."

That was left on the answering facility just after 10pm. A further five messages were received over a 25-minute period, which were abusive.

Solicitor Linda Clark said that the complainant had been a "good friend" of the accused for some considerable time.

"She had disclosed personal matters to her, believing it to be in confidence."

"But the complainant had thereafter discussed that information with various third parties and she found out."

The friendship had since broken down. At the time she had been on medication but had stopped taking it.

She then started to "self-medicate" by taking alcohol.

Custody for 'car freak'

A STRUCK-OFF Perthshire nurse was remanded in custody after being caught drunk behind the wheel for the third time in six months.

William Dundas, from Methven, was released from prison on August 20 after being convicted of two drink-driving offences in April, and of stealing bottles of vodka from a Perth supermarket while armed with a knife.

Despite being banned from the road until May 2016, police stopped and arrested Dundas earlier this month after the self-confessed car-freak was spotted driving a Mazda erratically at Methven.

Officers found Dundas, who lost his offshore job after going to jail, was slurring his speech and smelling strongly of alcohol.

At Perth Sheriff Court, Dundas (51), of Sauchob Road, admitted driving on October 13, while disqualified, with 99 micrograms (mics) of alcohol in his breath - the limit is 35mics.

He had been banned in June after admitting drink-driving on the A85 Crieff to Perth road and at Methven, with 114mics, on May 2.

Earlier, he pled guilty to driving on April 25 with a reading of 104mics after robbing Tesco in Crieff Road while armed. Dundas, who was remanded in custody, will be sentenced on November 12.

Be on guard as dark nights draw in

CLOCKS change this weekend as winter sets in and residents are being warned criminals start to capitalise on the shorter days.

Traditionally, the number of break-ins go up during the darker nights and Tayside Police, hoping homeowners will take every step possible to reduce their chances of becoming a victim of crime, have launched Operation After Dark.

The blitz on house break-ins was launched in Muirton this week by Constable Alan Leitch, the local community crime officer.

Community Wardens Veronica Atkinson and Steven Gourdie; and Mr Gavin Stewart, Muirton Neighbourhood Watch coordinator.

Throughout October officers will carry out high profile foot and mobile patrols in all parts of the city as part of Operation After Dark, aimed at preventing the number of house break-ins, and After Dark information cards are available from Donald Campbell, Tayside Police's Crime Prevention Officer for Perth and Kinross by calling 01738 892937.

And remember, the clocks go back one hour at 2am on Sunday, October 26 - meaning an extra hour in bed!

Proving power of positive thinking

PERTSHIRE'S most positive people took a bow at a special awards ceremony last night.

The annual Perthshire Positive Action Awards showcase the skills and enterprise of people across the Big County. Thursday's awards were at AK Bell Library, and were presented by Councillor Callum Gillies, of Perth and Kinross Quality of Life Trust.

Among the winners

in Tuesday's PA.



DARK CRIME: Pictured at yesterday's launch with the 'After Dark' information cards are - Steven Gourdie and Veronica Atkinson, Gavin Stewart (Muirton Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator) and PC Alan Leitch. (Tayside Police local community crime officer).
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Having their say on devolution

VOLUNTARY organisations across the Big County can voice their opinions on Tuesday.

The event, organised by the Scottish Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO), will see Roseanna Cunningham, MSP for Perth, talk about the role the sector has to play in the First Minister Alex Salmond's 'National Conversation' on independence, as well as the

Calman Commission's review on devolution. Stephen Maxwell, associate director of the SCVO, will also take part. Results will go to the Scottish Government. The debate will run from 10am-1pm in the Fair City's Gateway centre. Admission is free, including lunch. For places contact Jill Flye, at the SCVO: (0131) 4746157.

Perth policeman is now a sergeant

A PERTSHIRE policeman has stepped up the ladder of success.

Former Guildtown Primary School and Perth Academy pupil, Tayside Police Constable Andrew Ness is now a sergeant.

Sergeant Ness joined Tayside Police in 1990 after gaining an honours degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering.

Following a number of years carrying out beat duties in Perth and Blair-

gowrie Andrew joined the local road policing unit. In 2001 he returned to beat duties in Perth before becoming the divisional training officer.

In 2008 he returned to beat duties and after a short period within the rural areas of Perth he was posted to Blairgowrie.

Andrew will be staying in Blairgowrie in the rank of sergeant.