



New awards scheme for entrepreneurs launched

Helping emerging businesses is not just a nice thing to do - at this stage in Ireland's economic development, actively supporting more start ups is now a survival issue, according to businessman, Alfie Kane, "and it starts on a county and micro level with each county ensuring it supports its emerging entrepreneurs."

Mr. Kane was speaking at the launch of the 2008 David Manley Emerging Entrepreneur Awards last week. Mr. Kane is Chairman of the panel of Judges for the Award and is Chief Executive of Baker Capital Corporation, New York. The aim of the David Manley Emerging Entrepreneur Awards is to nurture Ireland's entrepreneurial spirit.

The winner of the 2008 David Manley Emerging Entrepreneur Award will receive 'the gift of time' in mentoring and consultancy worth over €80,000 from a selection of top Irish companies as their prize as well as a cash prize of €10,000. The Awards will be presented in November. Further details and a copy of the entry form can be obtained on www.davidmanleyawards.ie

"Given the global and local economic slow down - if not recession - that we are facing into over the next few years and our continuing loss of competitive edge in the world market and, dare I say it, the mismatch between our cost base and GDP growth rates - I believe we are going to be even more dependant on internally generated business activity," Mr. Kane said.

"And the majority of that additional activity will, in the main, come from the SME sector. The seeds from which these SME firms emerge are the very same start up or emerging businesses which we in the David Manley Awards Committee are seeking to support. So I say that encouraging and supporting entrepreneurs to start up new businesses is no longer just a good thing to do - for Roscommon and every other county in Ireland now it is virtually an economical survival issue".

Mr. Kane continued, "For a small country such as Ireland, without the critical mass of market demand, VC firms and emerging businesses, we cannot just sit back and like the religious manager just pray it will all come out ok in the end. Because it will not 'just happen' - we need to help make it happen. Both the Government and we in business must redouble our efforts to improve significantly the success rate of our own emerging businesses. And as we hear repeatedly from our own winners, the gift of time is even more important than the cash component of an award."

The David Manley Emerging Entrepreneur Award is in its sixth year and rewards the enterprising spirit in Business, the Arts and in the Social community. Business to Arts, Social Entrepreneurs Ireland, selected Business Innovation Centres and Incubation Centres work with the David Manley Award Committee in implementing the Award scheme.

Also speaking at the launch, Sean Coughlan of Social Entrepreneurs Ireland said, "Entrepreneurs, with their passion, motivation and innovation, are transforming Ireland. Through business, arts and not-for-profit organisations throughout Ireland they are creating new and exciting solutions to the challenges we face."