

Hampshire County Council to sponsor Rural Business of the Year

Hampshire County Council is to sponsor the Rural Business of the Year category in this year's Winchester Business Excellence Awards.

Judges for this award will be drawn from the Economic Development Office of Hampshire County Council, a team of professionals who provide a unique support service to Hampshire's business community and continues to increase the awareness of Hampshire as a business-friendly location.

In terms of its geographical area, Hampshire is a predominantly rural County so, to reflect this, the Economic Development Office leads on a number of initiatives and programmes designed to support our rural economy. The local food initiative supports local food producers through county food group Hampshire Fare, Hampshire County Council works with market towns and partners, to deliver funding to Hampshire to benefit some of its small rural towns, The Hampshire Village Community Grant Scheme provides better services locally for rural people and to improve access to essential services not available locally and the shop in Hampshire initiative is in partnership with Newsquest and encourages shoppers to buy local by using the website, www.shopinhampshire.co.uk.

Cllr Jonathan Glen, County Council's Executive Member for Skills and Economic Development and Human Resources, comments:

"Hampshire County Council understands the importance of the rural economy, and we welcome the opportunity to give recognition to rural businesses in the Winchester area, through our support of this award in the Winchester Business Excellence Awards. We encourage rural businesses in the district to come forward to enter the Rural Business of the Year award and showcase what they do. We anticipate another very difficult job again judging this year's entries! "

This Award will be presented to an outstanding rural business that balances the need to be competitive with a responsibility to the local environment and community.

The judges will be looking for:

- ❑ A rural business which can demonstrate sound financial and business planning.
- ❑ A rural business which can demonstrate its flexibility and success in overcoming the challenges of working in a rural environment.
- ❑ A rural business that balances the need to be competitive with a responsibility to the local environment.