

# Wales businessnews in brief



**FLOWER POWER:** Suzi Hunt who worked for investment bank Goldman Sachs now has a floristry in Cardiff PICTURE: Liz Pearce ©

## Charity lines up super speakers for fundraiser

**SOUTH WALES** businesswomen's charity Superwoman will hold its fifth annual fundraising event tomorrow.

Among the speakers will be Rosie Swale Pope who, on her 57th birthday in 2003, set off from her home in Tenby to run around the world.

Also addressing the event will be Morfudd Richards from Criccieth, who worked at some of the top London restaurants including the Ivy, Le Caprice and Harvey's, before opening her own restaurant in Islington called Lola's.

They will be joined by Suzi Hunt who worked for investment

bank Goldman Sachs in London but decided to open her own flower business in Cardiff.

Organiser Bethan Darwin, of Darwin Gray Solicitors, said: "I'm delighted with the speakers for this year's event. Each of these three women has a truly fascinating tale to tell and will

leave a good positive feeling in the minds of the audience.

"The fact that Superwoman is still going strong and people are prepared to give something to those who need help despite the current economic climate is something we should all be proud of."

## Uno aims to help small firms

A PROJECT to boost small businesses has been launched in Denbighshire.

Uno – which in Welsh means together – will promote rural micro companies and one of the region's top business brains is backing it.

Entrepreneur Norman Jones used to head Withersdale Plastics of Wrexham, but now he's lending his skills to help small companies develop their own big ideas as part of the £238,000 project.

He heads up Uno's seven-strong team of business gurus who bring vast experience and expertise to support local businesses.

He also acts as a business angel for Xenos, a business introduction service for Wales which introduces investors to companies seeking growth funding and who are prepared in return to offer an equity share in the business – Wales' own Dragons Den.

He said: "The idea is to bring big business marketing and promotion to rural Denbighshire's micro-businesses, those that employ fewer than ten people,

and there are at least 840 of them.

"This is a vitally important sector for the economies of the Dee Valley and the Vale of Clwyd.

"It will market rural Denbighshire in a way that has never happened before and can bring massive benefits to the area.

"It is very similar to organisations which operate in Cheshire, Liverpool and Manchester, but it is one of the first in Wales."

The project, which is backed by rural development agency Cadwyn Clwyd and by Denbighshire County Council, will identify and set up clusters of similar businesses and commission research to help them develop new markets.

Funding is coming via The Rural Development Plan for Wales which is financed by the European Agricultural Fund and the Welsh Assembly Government



## Work begins on Swansea's £10m eco-homes development

**CONSTRUCTION** on a £10m green housing scheme for Swansea has started.

The eco-homes development by Coastal Housing on land acquired from the Welsh Assembly Government will create 69 apartments overlooking the Prince of Wales Dock on SA1 Swansea Waterfront.

Minister for the Economy and Transport Ieuan Wyn Jones said: "It's good news to see a major construction project like this going ahead in these challenging market conditions and is a mark of confidence in the SA1 development.

"This investment is a boost for the city and will not only help sustain jobs in the construction industry and provide local businesses with supply opportunities but will also create a range of affordable homes on one of Swansea's most prestigious development sites."

Deputy Minister for Housing Jocelyn Davies said: "I am pleased that these new affordable homes are being built to the highest environmental standards. These homes build on our success so far in reaching over the half way mark in our target to create 6,500 new affordable homes by April 2011.

"I announced in March this year that we had created 3,252 homes since making the One Wales commitment in 2007. As one of the pilot projects aimed at informing higher environmental standards the scheme will provide important information and experience to inform future policy."

The building has been designed by Holder Mathias architects. The contract has been awarded to Jehu of Bridgend and a local supply chain has been set up to maximise benefits for Welsh companies.

## Bacteria-busting product for use in gyms has real muscle

A PRODUCT which is set to revolutionise the way gyms and fitness centres fight bacteria has been launched by a Port Talbot company.

GymGuard has been designed to reduce cross-contamination and infection of both gym users and fitness staff and is the first product of its kind targeted at the leisure industry in the UK.

The product was originally formulated for use by aviation giants Boeing to clean and sanitise the high-use cabin fixtures and fittings on passenger jets.

It has been adapted by water treatment and protection experts Garod Thomas and Steve Boshier to protect gym equipment and its users from the spread of

99.99% of all known germs.

The business partners, who have more than 20 years' experience working in the water treatment and pharmaceutical industries, now run the successful South Wales-based water filtration and testing company Intelligent Water Solutions.

GymGuard is pumped on to a towel or piece of blue roll from a wall dispenser in the gym and wiped over the surface of equipment before and after use.

Following a comprehensive test period in gyms across South Wales, where the partners received rave responses from both gym users and staff, GymGuard has been launched for use in gyms across the UK.

## LHS rated most active agency

**COMMERCIAL** property consultancy Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) has been named Estates Gazette's most active national agent – one of the biggest awards in the industry.

"To have our efforts recognised is a great achievement and collectively these awards strengthen our position both regionally and nationally."

Steve Matheson, head of

LSH's agency team in Wales, said: "Earlier this year LSH was named Estates Gazette's most active national agent – one of the biggest awards in the industry.

"To have our efforts recognised is a great achievement and collectively these awards strengthen our position both regionally and nationally."

## Tân Y Castell gets on track with Welsh cakes for Aviva

**PEMBROKESHIRE** bakery Tân Y Castell Welshcakes has signed a deal that sees its products sold on Arriva Trains.

Arriva Trains have launched Tân Y Castell Welshcakes Snack Pack after the company recently launched its snack pack of two Welshcakes to cater for the snacks-to-go market.

Paul Mear, of Tân Y Castell

Welshcakes said: "Consumers are becoming increasingly busy with work and general lifestyle. We felt that there was a gap in the market for such a product which is easily available and ready to eat.

"Arriva Trains are the first to take on board our Snack Pack of Welshcakes, we look forward to working together."

# British rules on flight hours flies in face of rest of Europe

WHAT is in my top ten of announcements that I don't want to hear from the pilot when I get on an aircraft? My number one is: "I don't feel well", but following closely behind at number two is "I'm feeling tired".

However, that is effectively what happened last week when flight crew had a European action day on crew fatigue. Flight Crew at airports in 22 European countries handed out fake boarding cards containing warnings on flight crew fatigue.

The action has been organised because a report about the "Scientific and Medical Evaluation of Flight Time Limitations" (the Moebius Report) sponsored by the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has not led to the recommended revision of the amount of time that flight crew can be on duty.

Two incidents illustrate the dangers of crew fatigue. In the first in February 2008 a go! airlines flight between Honolulu and Hilo, Hawaii flew 26 miles past its destination when both pilots fell



asleep on an early morning flight. It transpired that the crew had flown on early flights on several consecutive days.

In another accident that occurred near Buffalo, New York in February there were more tragic consequences. The Colgan Air flight crashed killing 50 people and fatigue is thought to have been a factor. Despite not being adequately rested the night before, the crew were over nine hours into their duty period by the time they crashed at 10.18pm.

The United States is now to overhaul their own rules on flight hours and take into account scientific studies about what causes fatigue. The new rules are likely to be closer to those that currently apply in the UK.

The current European limit for duty in one continuous period is 13 hours that can be extended to

14 hours twice in any seven consecutive days. For duty starting between 10pm and 5am the maximum allowable with extensions is 11 hours 45 minutes.

Amazingly, in some European countries these rules represented a tightening of the regulations.

However, the current European Regulations have not been adopted in the UK because, at the moment, this country doesn't have to accept flight duty hours rules that weaken our existing regulations.

UK regulations already take into account those factors which cause fatigue. So if a crew flies early in the morning or late at night and if they have to land the aircraft several times during their duty then permitted duty hours will be reduced.

So why are airlines so opposed to having more scientifically

based regulations? Airlines are currently experiencing very challenging market conditions and are under pressure to use flight crew to the maximum to reduce costs. The low cost airline model depends on maximising productivity.

The most efficient way to use flight crew is for them to fly the maximum allowable hours once they are in the aircraft. This is because once flight crew report for duty at the airport or even when they get out of bed if they are resting at an airport away from their base, then they are using their allowable duty hours. Whether they are being briefed at the airport, waiting to board the aircraft or even sitting in the aircraft waiting for passengers to board, they are still using those duty hours.

An airline wanting to reduce costs and maximise profits (or more likely, at the moment, to reduce losses) will have as many duty hours as possible used for flying and that means long working days.

It is interesting that European

Working Time Directives consider it unsafe for lorry drivers to drive for more than ten hours, but EASA consider it safe for flight crew to be on duty for 14 hours regardless of the time of day that they started and regardless of the work load that they have undertaken during their duty.

So what would we rather have, airlines that can reduce costs by using flight crews to the maximum or crews that are appropriately rested for the flights that they have to operate? If I'm on an aircraft late at night with the crew at the end of their day having already performed several landings and take-offs, I'd know which I'd rather have.

We should be grateful that in the UK we have maintained the standards set by the Civil Aviation Authority but it is time that those standards become the standard across Europe.

■ **Martin Evans is external research fellow in the Wales Transport Research Centre, Glamorgan Business School, University of Glamorgan**

## Estate planners expand into Wales with subsidiary

ONE of the UK's largest estate planning and legal services companies has established its first wholly-owned Welsh subsidiary in Cardiff.

First Welsh Legacies has been launched by Bristol-based WDS Group to provide professional will writing, estate management and associated legal support for clients throughout Wales.

Established in 1992, WDS handles the personal affairs of more than 60,000 subscribers who benefit from will storage and access to probate and administration advice services.

Heading First Welsh Legacies is sales director Ken Jones, who has been part of WDS for five years, and Thomas Jones, director of business development, who joined the company in March of this year.

Managing director of the WDS Group of companies Mike Diamond said: "We are finding that more people are choosing to put their estate planning needs into the hands of a specialist company like ourselves due to the increasing complexity of legislation, with a resultant boost in business for us in Wales.

"We will be creating further job opportunities as our company develops in line with the rising levels of demand for our bespoke services – welcome news during these difficult economic times."

Ken Jones added: "We have ambitious growth plans for Wales and will be recruiting both internal support and sales staff as well as regional consultants during the next six months.

"The WDS business model is well proven in the rest of the UK and now with our strong indigenous operation we are set to bring new levels of professional choice to the Welsh estate planning market."



**AMBITIOUS:** Ken Jones, left, sales director and Thomas Jones, business development director, of First Welsh Legacies

## Rates 'to stay at record low level'

INTEREST rates will stay at rock bottom in the years to come as the Government tackles the UK's wounded economy, a report predicts.

The cost of borrowing is to remain at its record low of 0.5% until at least 2011 and remain below 2% until 2014, according to a study by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR).

A weaker pound – slumping to just \$1.40 and possibly falling below parity with the euro – is also expected.

The CEBR predicts the next government will have to engineer around £100bn in tax rises and spending cuts to deal with the country's deficit.

Political parties are already vying to explain how they plan to address the dire public finances after next year's general election.

The report forecasts that should the Conservatives win power this will mean £20bn in extra taxes with an £80bn reduction in spending.

A future government will have to wrestle the budget deficit down to £50bn by the 2014/15 financial year, a tough challenge as the CEBR also warns that the deficit will be £143bn in that year without action.

The report also predicts the Bank of England will increase its quantitative easing (QE) programme – essentially printing money – by another £75bn.

This month the Bank voted to not to increase its programme to boost the money supply from its current £175bn.

But further QE is expected, not least because governor Mervyn King and two other committee members have already argued for a £75bn boost to the scheme.

CEBR chief executive Douglas McWilliams said: "We are likely to see an exciting policy mix, with the fiscal policy lever pulled right back while the monetary lever is fast forward.

"Our analysis says that this ought to work. If it does so, we are likely to see a major re-rating of equities and property which in turn should stimulate economic growth after a lag."

The CEBR expects UK economic growth between 2009 and 2014 to average 1.4%, although it predicts the hefty budget cuts to get the country's finances back on track will cause the figures to dip in 2011 and 2012.

After that, weak sterling and low interest rates are predicted to encourage investment, halting the trend for savings and boosting exports.