



**West Devon Business Information Point
Bridge House
Rooms 2 -4
25 Fore Street
Okehampton
EX20 1DL**

**www.bipwestdevon.biz
team@bipwestdevon.biz**

BIP NEWSLETTER

RURAL ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

In the last newsletter we informed you about the launch of our new project Rural Enterprise Development (RED), later you will read about the first tranche of workshops that we are running under this programme.

The 2006 tourist season is coming to an end, how has it been for you? The general feeling is that it's been a variable year, with the determining factor being the quality of the offer, together with a good web presence.

We are intending to make the RED programme as flexible and demand led as possible. If you are a tourism business and feel that this season could have been better, why not consider attending a marketing workshop to assess your marketing techniques and how they could be improved. Catherine Broomfield, our marketing trainer, has considerable experience in marketing tourism businesses. Participants at previous workshops have commented how valuable they have been in generating new business.

Is your web presence working for you, what percentage of visitor's book because of your website? If you feel you could do better why not attend a web marketing workshop run by Deborah Turner which will focus on the key points to make your website really do the business. All workshops can be delivered at locations convenient to you.

The enclosed leaflet contains full details of the RED project; if it's a workshop you want or intensive business support please call and we will do our utmost to help grow your business.

**Stewart Horne
Manager**

DIRECT MAIL – IS IT WORTH IT

A recent report (following market research) has established that consumers open 85% of direct mail received from Financial Service firms, or alternatively they only throw away 15% of direct mail without opening the envelope. Charities and mail order firms tend to do less well with some 30% of mail being wasted without being opened.

The reason that the financial mail does better in terms of being studied by the recipient is that this mail is better targeted at potential customers.

Hence the message emerging is that direct mail can be a very potent promotional tool, especially when there is careful targeting for the recipients.

Reducing Electric and Telephone Bills

We recently ran a workshop with 9 attendees who were interested in determining how electricity and telephone bills could be reduced. Using the Internet to search for alternative suppliers and services, the morning's workshop uncovered some interesting situations.

On electric bills it was clear that people who have fixed price contracts that were negotiated over the last two to three years have enjoyed a period of relatively stable and cheap electricity. However, when these contracts come to an end, they will be in for a large increase, in some cases a 30% to 40% increase could be possible if they stay with their current supplier. These increases could be minimised by changing suppliers. In percentage terms the difference between the most expensive and cheapest electricity supplier was some 20% to 25%.

With regards to telephone costs, the advent of the unbundling of the local loop, i.e. a technical term which means that BT will now allow other telephone providers the use of some of the lines, which means that the line rental no longer has to be with BT, it is clear that significant savings can be achieved. In one circumstance, a bill approaching £500 a year could be reduced to just over £200 by moving to a different line provider and different call service provider.

The feedback from the participants during the workshop was positive and even those that had just negotiated new contracts were pleased with the time spent. They felt it worthwhile in terms of understanding how the energy and telephone supply industry works these days and in several circumstances they went away armed with the information that will enable them to save several hundreds of pounds per annum.

A good source of information is www.uswitch.com which will allow you to compare providers.

OCTOBER WORKSHOPS

During October we will be running the following workshops: -

Maintain the performance of your computer

Tuesday October 17 10.30 – 12.30am - Tavy Business Centre, Pitts Cleave, Tavistock.

Marketing your products and services using the Internet

Tuesday 24 October 10:30 – 15:00- West Devon Business Information Point, Bridge House, 25 Fore Street, Okehampton.

Computer Training

These workshops are idea for beginners through to intermediate, and offer you a choice of topics such as Internet & Email, Managing Files, Spreadsheets, Web Page Creation, Database and Publisher with individual support from our in-house tutor.

Wednesday 18 October - West Devon BIP, Okehampton

Thursday 19 October - Tavy Business Centre, Pitts Cleave, Tavistock

Wednesday 25 October - West Devon BIP, Okehampton

Wednesday 1 November - West Devon BIP, Okehampton

Wednesday 15 November - West Devon BIP, Okehampton

For further information or to book a place on one of these workshops, please call the office on Freephone 0800 592872

Wild about Trees



With the help of hundreds of volunteers, Dartmoor-based charity **Moor Trees** plants thousands of trees each year - all for the love of beautiful, wild, oak woodlands. There's precious little left of our ancient woodlands, what remains are wonderful oases for rare plants and animals. Native woodlands are home to flowers like the yellow archangel, the rare Blue Ground Beetle, and several rare species of bat, as well as some very special birds such as the lesser-spotted woodpecker.

Based on Dartmoor, Moor Trees works with local volunteers and landowners, to create new woods for our hard-pressed wildlife. Landowners can take advantage of a free service from Moor Trees to help people create their own new "ancient" woodland.

"We provide trees, volunteers and help with obtaining grants, all designed to make it hassle free and inexpensive" says Adam Griffin, Wildwoods Service Coordinator at Moor Trees. "People love to come out and help, just knowing they are doing something positive for their local environment, and what could be more positive than planting more trees!"

"We grow all our trees from locally-gathered seed in our community tree nurseries around the National Park. That way the trees we plant have a great chance of survival, as they're already genetically adapted to the local environment. Landowners, for whom we create schemes, are very pleased at the high quality of the planting and how well it blends into the landscape. That is where our secret lies."

"By planting locally native species in random patterns, we imitate how nature would naturally go about expanding her woodlands. This helps the trees establish more quickly and the results are amazing. We have a 99% success rate".

So, if you would you like to leave a legacy for generations to come, a wildlife jewel that benefits everyone, please contact Moor Trees and you, too, could be helping our wildwoods to return.

For information about Moor Trees and their free Wildwoods Service go to www.moortrees.org, email info@moortrees.org or phone us on 0845 456 9803 (local rate)

Maternity Leave

The regulations regarding maternity entitlements for pregnant women whose babies are due on or after 1st April 2007 are now beginning to affect employers. The rules which have changed are:

- All employed women are entitled to maternity leave
- The payment period for statutory maternity pay and maternity allowance has been extended to 39 weeks
- The notice a woman must give if she is changing her date of return from maternity leave has been increased from 28 days to 8 weeks
- Optional keeping in touch days has been introduced enabling a woman to work for up to 10 days during her maternity leave period
- All women have a right to return to work after maternity leave regardless of the size of the employer

We would advise all employers potentially affected by these regulations to visit the DTI web site on www.dti.gov.uk/employment/workandfamilies and look at the guide on maternity entitlements and responsibilities. There is also a very useful downloadable handbook entitled "Pregnancy and Work – What you need to know as an employer" which provides basic information and helpful contact phone numbers.

FIRE SAFETY LAW CHANGES

The 1st October 2006 sees changes to fire safety law, which could be relevant to you if you have diversified into other areas of business such as tourist accommodation, tea rooms, workshops, offices, etc. Fire Certificates will be abolished and enforcing authorities (usually fire authorities) will carry out inspections.

The new law makes it your responsibility to ensure the safety of everyone who uses your premises and in the immediate vicinity.

You are required to carry out a risk assessment, comprising of: -

- Fire hazards
- People at risk
- Formulate an action plan
- Record, plan and train
- Review

A set of self guidance notes has been developed to tell you what you have to do to comply with fire safety law, help carry out a fire risk assessment and identify the general fire precautions that you need to have in place. The guides are designed so that a person with limited formal training or experience should be able to carry out the fire risk assessment, but if you feel unable to apply the guidance then you should seek expert advice.

More information and the guidance notes are available for download at www.communities.gov.uk/fire

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

If you would like your BIP newsletter by email or fax send your details through to us at-

E-Mail: team@bipwestdevon.biz
Fax: 01837 659314

Address: West Devon Business Information Point, FREEPOST EX1119, Okehampton, EX20 1YZ

If you no longer wish to receive the newsletter please let us know.

FREE HALF-DAY AWARENESS EVENTS

If you are thinking about starting up in business there are many issues to be considered, the Business Link Start-Up Service is offering free half-day awareness sessions which will be delivered by West Devon Business Information Point.

Events will be held on: -

- **Weds 25th October**
Tavistock Business Centre, Tavistock
- **Tues 7th November**
West Devon BIP, Okehampton
- **Thurs 23rd November –**
High Moorland Business Centre, Princetown
- **Weds 6th December –**
West Devon BIP, Okehampton

For further information or to book a place please call us on **Freephone 0800 592872**

TESCOS ANNOUNCE REGIONAL BUYING OFFICES

Tesco's have announced that it will open 6 new regional buying offices to increase local sourcing and make it easier for small producers to sell goods through their supermarket outlets. The regional offices will have buying teams who will be more approachable and more accessible to small local producers.

Tesco have also indicated that they will provide marketing, technical and merchandising support within these regional offices in order to provide support and assistance to the local producers so that they may deliver a product more easily to achieve Tesco's standards.

This is only one supermarket currently. Where Tesco goes today other supermarkets tend to follow, so there may well be more opportunities for other local producers in the future.

This could be an opportunity to develop your business; however some caution may be needed to protect your interests and your trading relationships with any other retailers that you trade with.



DISCLAIMER

Every effort has been taken to ensure the information contained in these notes is correct, however, West Devon Business Information Point will not be liable for any loss arising from the use of these notes or any omissions or errors contained within.

Sponsored by the European Regional Development Fund, Devon Renaissance / SWRDA and Business Link.