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Business news



All the award winners celebrate after the ceremony held at Mercedes Benz World in Weybridge.

Cream of the crop celebrate in style

by **Caroline Bullock**

THE most successful companies across Surrey have been rewarded for their hard work and high standards at the Surrey Business Awards ceremony held at Mercedes-Benz World Brooklands at Weybridge last week.

Attended by more than 300 guests, the ceremony was the glamorous conclusion to an almost year-long process to identify the county's best businesses across a range of sectors and disciplines.

Best small business, business person of the year, international business, customer service, marketing, innovation, leisure and tourism and training and development were all rewarded following a detailed judging process.

Peter Gordon from 96.4 The Eagle hosted the evening which despite being just in its second year is fast becoming one of the most high profile and eagerly anticipated events of the local business calendar.

Walking away with perhaps the most coveted prize of the night, was Aquilaheywood, the UK's largest supplier of pensions administration software solutions

based in Redhill which was crowned Surrey Company of the year.

The company was praised for its focused approach to the marketplace which has led to high profitability and growth.

"Taking part in the Surrey Business Awards has been an exciting experience and it is a great honour to be recognised with this award by the Surrey business community," said joint chief executive, David Ackroyd.

Triumphing in the *Surrey Advertiser*-sponsored small business category was Godalming-based IT company, Ramsac.

The firm which counts pop star Robbie Williams as one of its clients was a finalist last year and was thrilled to go one better and take home the trophy.

Ramsac impressed with its informed and accessible approach to IT solutions and by demonstrating consistency in maintaining the high standards it has set itself.

Last year the company increased its workforce by 20% and gained status as a Microsoft gold partner. And with more than 150 customers outsourcing their IT management to Ramsac and a client retention rate of 97% it has

clearly found a winning formula. "We had an extremely successful 2006, increasing our staff levels and winning new business as well as delivering new and improved services to our existing clients," said director of operations, Dan May.

"We have also gained entry into entirely new markets providing IT solutions to organisations in areas such as construction, dentistry, charity, event management, recruitment and property management as well as our traditional stronghold of accountants, legal firms and professional services."

Business person of the year went to chairman of Phoenix plc, Peter Knight, an integrated communications agency working with the property and professional services industries which he set up in 1989. And it was good news for Guildford Spectrum Leisure Complex which scooped the leisure and tourism award.

With the formalities complete, guests were left to enjoy the serious business of networking and dancing in what was undoubtedly an impressive and unique venue, affording guests the chance to get up close to some of the most exclusive cars in the world.