



Scottish Council for
Development and Industry

PRESS RELEASE

JACOBITE CRUISES LEADER CELEBRATES BEST SUMMER WITH HIGHLAND ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR CROWN

18 September 2009

The vision of businesswoman Freda Newton of creating a new world class tourism experience in the Highlands and Islands, which has enjoyed another record-breaking year for visitors, last night saw her receive The Gordon & MacPhail Award for Excellence in Entrepreneurship.

Freda bought Jacobite Cruises in 2002 and under her leadership it has become one of Scotland's best tourism businesses, with customers increasing from 38,000 to over 100,000.

With investment in a new fleet, innovative marketing and strong customer focus, the Jacobite experience today is renowned for 5 Star Cruises on Loch Ness and Tours from Inverness. A serial entrepreneur and champion of the area, Freda plans further innovative developments.

The presentation was made by HSBC's Chief Executive Officer for Scotland, John Rendall, at the Scottish Council for Development and Industry's 10th Highlands and Islands Annual Dinner and Business Excellence Awards, which attracted 350 guests from around the region.

Freda Newton said:

"I'd like to thank Gordon & MacPhail for recognising our work at Jacobite Cruises and in the wider tourism sector. I believe passionately that the Highlands has a huge opportunity to improve our offer to visitors and in doing so contribute to growing the Highland economy. Over the next few years we plan to offer new products and services to tourists while working to help other organisations achieve excellence."

Michael Urquhart, Joint Managing Director, Gordon & MacPhail, said:

"On behalf of all the team at Gordon & MacPhail I pass on our warmest congratulations. Embracing innovation, an entrepreneurial spirit and a burning desire to succeed are qualities Freda has in abundance. Like Gordon & MacPhail Freda is from the Highlands and is an inspiration to young people and what can be achieved with drive and determination."



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The full winners list of winners was:

- Caledonian MacBrayne Award for Excellence in Tourism - Grenitote Travel, North Uist
- Crown Estate Award for Excellence in a Marine Business - The Underwater Centre, Fort William
- Global Energy Award for Excellence in People Development - Alcan Aluminium UK, Fort William
- Gordon & MacPhail Award for Excellence in Entrepreneurship - Freda Newton, Owner and Managing Director, Jacobite Cruises, Inverness
- HSBC Award for Excellence in International Business - Lossie Seafoods, Buckie
- Highlands and Islands Enterprise Award for Excellence in Research and Innovation – Blueshell Mussels, Shetland
- SEPA Award for Excellence in Environmental Sustainability - Touchwood Recycling, Uig, Skye
- SCDI Award for Highlands and Islands Young Engineers Club of the Year – Tarbert Academy, Argyll
- SCDI Highlands and Islands Chairman’s Award for Outstanding Business Achievement – Marine Harvest, Fort William

This year’s event was the 10th SCDI Highlands and Islands Annual Dinner and Business Excellence Awards and it was held at The Drumossie Hotel in Inverness. The evening was hosted by Fred MacAulay and after dinner entertainment was provided by Sandi Toksvig.

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