



BEDFORD  
CENTRAL FOR BUSINESS

Central for Business Newsletter

# new Central



## Boomtown Bedford Welcome to the first issue of "Central for Business"

The publication of this new magazine by the Bedford Development Agency (BDA) is especially topical given that a new economic survey predicts Bedfordshire will be among the most expanding areas of Europe over the next five years. Research professionals, Experian, say five of the top ten boom areas in Europe will be in the South of England, and this includes Bedfordshire. They confirm what we in the Borough already know – Bedford is booming.\*

The UK Government has already designated Bedford a key town for new homes and jobs - and that means investment and growth over the next decade. To meet the demands of new businesses relocating to Bedford, and of existing businesses expanding in the area, the BDA is leading the "Bedford Central for Business" campaign.

Local businesses are being invited to become Associate Members of this key BDA initiative and be a part of the many exciting changes ahead. A network is growing of all the bright, new businesses and thriving established companies in the area who will come together to share ideas and experience.

Join us as we take Bedford into a vibrant business future.

Mike Smith, Chairman, Bedford Development Agency

\*Sunday Times 8/8/04 "Boomtown Europe set to be Southern England"

## CENTRAL FOR BUSINESS

**Bedford is Central to Business** because of its location. Improving road and rail transport links to the rest of the country and Europe help, but more importantly, Bedfordshire is in the middle of "boomtown Britain". Bedford has more than 28 million people, half of the UK population, within two hours by road.

**Business is Central to Bedford** as a way of life. History shows that the town has always welcomed industry and innovation. A well educated and qualified workforce has enabled industry from engineering to IT to win markets at home and overseas.

To demonstrate investment in innovation today, the Bedford i-LAB will be launched in the Spring of 2005. It will be a £5.5 million centre at the Priory Business Park where entrepreneurs can nurture their young enterprises into thriving businesses.

### **Bedford Central is the Business.**

The renaissance of the town centre and surrounding parts of the Borough mean it is more attractive to companies and staff who need a thriving environment in which to work and live.

For further information on the campaign and the BDA please contact:

Bedford Development Agency on  
**01234 221889**  
email [bda@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:bda@bedford.gov.uk) or visit  
[www.investinbedford.com](http://www.investinbedford.com)

29th September 2004, 5.30pm  
Bedford Swan Hotel

## Business Miracles

**Key speakers** – Professor Alan Barrell, Business Angel, Entrepreneur & Cambridge University Lecturer and the Inland Revenue Business Support Team.

If you are interested in investing in your business and how you can save money, please contact the BDA on **01234 221889** or email [bda@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:bda@bedford.gov.uk)

Watch this space for details of future events!

Why not visit the new BDA website at [www.investinbedford.com](http://www.investinbedford.com) for a comprehensive guide for any company operating in or considering locating to the Bedford area?

# A Case Study- Bedfordshire & Luton Enterprise Centre, repairing local cars (and saving people money!)



ChipsAway (AshBruch) Ltd was formed in March 2003. They offer a fully mobile and workshop service to repair Bumper Scuffs, Dents & Scratches, Alloy Wheels and Interior & Exterior trim.

ChipsAway's first call was to the Bedfordshire & Luton Enterprise Centre to research its new business and market.

The Enterprise Centre used its strong Business Development network to create a package of assistance, including entry onto the High Growth Start-up Scheme, customer satisfaction surveys and access to European Funding to develop new business leads.

With the Enterprise Centre, ChipsAway has developed from its original Bedford base to serve Luton, Dunstable & Milton Keynes, increasing employment opportunities from 3 to 15 people and beating its original business plan. The BDA also successfully helped the company find premises.

The Enterprise Centre is a Division of Chamber Business.

Contact: 0845 850 8822

## FREE Travel Plan

Problems with staff parking? Deliveries can't get through because of traffic congestion? You can help your SME work more efficiently saving time and money – just look at the training available from the Business Travel Initiative – it's free.

"By working with staff, suppliers, neighbouring businesses and transport providers there are a number of straightforward measures you can take that will vastly improve your company's business travel management," says Steve Macey, Business Travel Training Co-ordinator, "It could be sharing a mini-bus with a neighbouring firm, or arranging for people to work at home one day a week. It doesn't have to be every day of the week to make a difference. The training will equip managers with the skills to develop a travel plan for their company which will bring real benefits.

BTI will enable businesses to focus on the efficient use of transport, fuel and resources as well as the reduction of congestion and pollution." Benefits will also include improved profits (time is money), improved relations with neighbours and others in the vicinity, as well as better staff recruitment and retention.

### How does the training work?

A training co-ordinator will provide high-level skills training to enable you to develop a travel plan which suits your business. BTI is free of charge because the more businesses that join the better for all. Plans can then be co-ordinated to benefit more than one company.

Look at the website [www.btravel.info](http://www.btravel.info) or email [steve.macey@bedscc.gov.uk](mailto:steve.macey@bedscc.gov.uk)

## Bedford to Brussels

When Bedford is connected to the new Eurostar Express in 2007, a trip to Brussels will take under three hours.

St Pancras is currently being remodelled to accommodate the Eurostar, linking London with Paris, Lille, and of course Brussels. By taking a 45 minute train to London and then making a quick connection, business people in Bedford could be in Brussels in three hours.

There will also be a boost for tourism in the town with the reverse flow of day trippers coming from the Continent.

## Fit for Duty

Help your staff get fit for life, and work, by arranging a Bedford Leisure Card deal. You can either treat your staff by bulk buying cards at a discount, or negotiating a corporate rate which they pay. Deals can include gym, swimming, squash and golf. Please call 01234 350300 for more details.



Catalyst, the work-based training division of Bedford College, is making all the right moves.

## Catalyst for change

The latest is a relocation to new premises which will put Catalyst in the midst of the cutting edge community it serves - Priory Business Park.

Catalyst was launched two years ago to meet the ever-growing demand from employers in Bedford and its district for training for all levels of staff. Such has been the success of Catalyst in dealing with international companies like 3M, Heinz, GM Vauxhall and Unipath across the county that it is now the first name that comes to mind when employers want to change the way they work.

### Colworth to become a leading UK Science Park

Unilever's current research and development site at Colworth in Sharnbrook, is set to become the hub of a vibrant science park, following the announcement of a joint venture between Unilever and Arlington Securities, the leading property services and fund management business.

The joint venture will be seeking to transform the site into a destination of choice for scientists, with a growth strategy focusing on attracting large established research and development companies, as well as small entrepreneurs. This will make Colworth one of the largest employers in North Bedfordshire and a major engine of regional growth.

### Queen's Awards

Top performing companies in Bedford are encouraged to enter for a Queen's Award for Enterprise, the UK's most prestigious celebration of business.

The value of such awards are many, when Bedford Brewers Charles Wells won a Queen's Award for Export, it achieved national press coverage, as well as plaudits from its overseas customers.

But you don't have to a big company to win; you need only two full-time employees, or PT equivalent. For more details go to [www.queensawards.org.uk](http://www.queensawards.org.uk)

"Catalyst is a force for change in the business community and we are helping companies retrain and retain staff at all levels" explained Catalyst Director Teresa Frith.

The new premises of Catalyst will be officially opened on Wednesday September 15th. Anyone wishing to attend, or who would like to know more about Catalyst and the courses it can offer should ring Julie Jeffery, Assistant Director Business Development on 01234 834302 or email [catalyst@bedford.ac.uk](mailto:catalyst@bedford.ac.uk)

### Keeping you safe...

Health and Safety Law can come as a nasty shock to companies which do not report accidents and injuries in the workplace. But not as nasty a shock as it is for the employee who is electrocuted, maimed or otherwise hurt at work.

Keep the company and your people safe - for advice ring Bedford Borough Council on 01234 227260 or go to [www.bedford.gov.uk](http://www.bedford.gov.uk) or [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

The Local Authority and the Health and Safety Executive are responsible for enforcing the law at commercial premises. They carry out inspections, investigate accidents and complaints, and to help you, provide information. As an employer you have a legal duty to report certain incidents - telephone 0845 300 9923 or go to [www.riddor.gov.uk](http://www.riddor.gov.uk).

### Business by Degrees

De Montfort University has a new Commercial Director for the Bedford Faculty of Education and Contemporary Studies. Steve Pennington, formerly of Pearson Education, will work with the Dean Kate Jacques to forge closer links with the local business community.

DMU Bedford offers consultancy, research and training for the business and education community with under graduate and post graduate degrees available.

Steve will be working with the public and private sector to create enterprising opportunities. He can be contacted on [spennington@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:spennington@dmu.ac.uk)



## BDA BOARD COMPANY PROFILE CHARLES WELLS

Founded in 1876 to provide beer to the local people of Bedford, Charles Wells is now the largest independently owned, family run brewery in the country. It remains a traditional family business yet its forward looking approach has given Charles Wells a global portfolio to offer its customers.

In 1976, the brewery location changed to accommodate the much increased demand and this enabled state of the art equipment to be installed. Some things remain, however, and Charles Wells beers are still made with water drawn from the well sunk by Charles when he started the business over 100 years ago.

Nearly 25% of the company's output is exported and in 1997 this market success was recognised when the company was presented with the Queens Award for Export Achievement.

To find out more on the story of Charles Wells and its global success, visit [www.charleswells.co.uk](http://www.charleswells.co.uk)

## Business in Europe

Looking for a gateway to Europe from Bedford - go via the local Euro Info Centre at [www.hertseic.co.uk](http://www.hertseic.co.uk)

Euro Info Centres provide assistance to businesses as a local point for information on EU legislation, standards, funding, programmes, the Euro, and finding business partners.

Finding a business partner in another country can be key to entering a new market. The EIC receives requests from business on the Continent looking for partners here and passes request from here across the Channel.

If it's a voice in Europe you want, try the East of England European Partnership office in Brussels. Go to [www.eastofengland.be](http://www.eastofengland.be)

## Benefit from business networking

Would you like to ask a like minded business how they undertook a particular task? Or share your own experiences with others?

Bedford is home to a variety of different networks which aim to support companies in the area through events, seminars and meetings. By registering as an Associate Membership of the BDA, you will be able to attend selected events for FREE! The BDA will also keep you informed about these networks. For more information on business networks in the Bedford area, please visit [www.investinbedford.com/business\\_network.htm](http://www.investinbedford.com/business_network.htm)

## Property of the Month

High quality units available at Kingfisher Business Park ranging from 1540 to 3300 sq ft. For more info on this and other properties, please visit [www.investinbedford.com/business/commercialproperty.asp](http://www.investinbedford.com/business/commercialproperty.asp)



## Bedford Town Centre UPDATE...

- Footfall in the town centre has increased by 20% over the last year.
- Expressions of interest have been sought for the development of Riverside Square.
- A draft Development Framework has been produced for Bedford Town Centre which shows how the town could develop over the next 25 years - more on this in the next issue.
- Plans for the redevelopment of the area in and around the Bus Station will be on show at an exhibition from 4-6 Nov in the Harpur Suite.

For more information, contact the Economic Development Unit at the Council on 01234 227349.

# Events

**Wednesday 29th September 2004**  
**Bedford Development Agency**  
**Business Miracles**  
17.30 - 19.30 Bedford Swan Hotel

See front page for details of this event, or for more information contact BDA on 01234 221889 or email: [bda@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:bda@bedford.gov.uk)

**Wednesday 6th October 2004**  
**Cranfield University**  
**Regional Business Club**  
**Speed Dating**  
17.45 - 19.30 Cranfield University

Come and meet other members of the Cranfield University Regional Business Club at our speed dating evening. You will have the opportunity to meet as many like-minded people as possible, sharing ideas, networking and identifying business opportunities.

To register for this FREE event or for more information contact Rachel Fulcher, Cranfield Creates, on 01234 754136 or email [r.e.fulcher@cranfield.ac.uk](mailto:r.e.fulcher@cranfield.ac.uk)

coming soon...

**November 2004. Business Rates explained.**  
Find out what changes are due to occur in 2005.

## Keep us posted...

### Want to know more about Central for Business and the BDA?

Found it useful to have all this business information at your fingertips in an easy to read newsletter?

Then let us hear from you with your business success and innovation stories.

Central for Business is about all that is bright and buzzing among the entrepreneurs of Bedford. Keep us posted by contacting:

**Bedford Development Agency**  
Town Hall, St Paul's Square,  
Bedford, MK40 1SJ

Tel: 01234 221889  
Fax: 01234 221888  
Email: [bda@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:bda@bedford.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.investinbedford.com](http://www.investinbedford.com)