

We are here to help

Chamber president outlines plans to help members prepare for recovery

■ Andrew Gibbs

TRAINING and networking will play a key role as North Bucks business emerges from the recession, says Milton Keynes & North Bucks Chamber of Commerce president Robert Goodman.

Mr Goodman was speaking at the Chamber's annual general meeting at De Vere Harben in Newport Pagnell. He told members that the Chamber would continue to play an important role to help businesses to ready themselves when the recovery really starts to kick in through the provision of training and networking opportunities.

He also reflected on the Chamber's achievements in 2009, including:

- New member benefits;
- Improved communications with members;
- Opening new channels for members to promote and develop their businesses;
- Securing two large training contracts;
- Organising trade delegations to the city;
- The Business Excellence Awards.

The AGM also elected two new directors representing members with less than 50 employees: Nicholas Mann, managing director of new media agency Interdirect, and Linda Mansfield, of Events in Business. Both will join the board for three years, attending their first board meeting in January.

The AGM was combined with the Chamber's Quarterly Economic Snapshot event, organised to gauge opinions from Chamber members as to what effect the current economic climate is having on Milton Keynes business and what the predictions are for the coming months.

The views help to formulate the Chamber's regular updates to the British Chambers of Commerce, which in turn directly influence the views and facts passed on to the government.

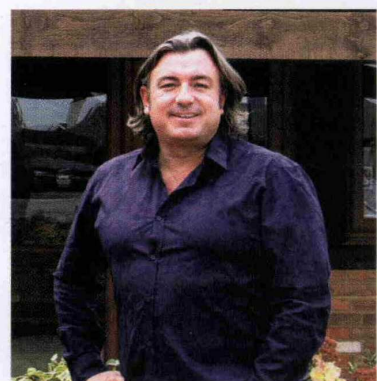
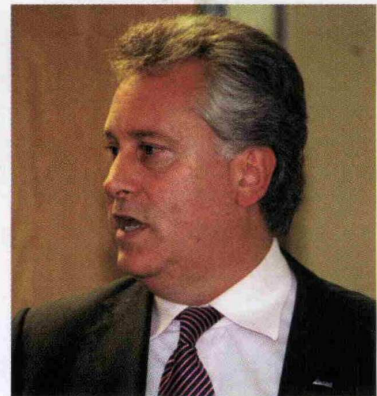
Speakers at the event included:

- Iain Stewart, the Conservative prospective parliamentary candidate for Milton Keynes South;
- Andy Smith, general manager and director of Amway (UK & Ireland);
- Guy Hawking, Invest Milton Keynes' investor development manager;
- Ephraidge Rinomhota, Milton Keynes Council's senior economic research officer.

Mr Rinomhota outlined the state of the

Milton Keynes economy, which had seen unemployment peak at five per cent of the workforce in September. However, the city remained attractive to investors and the economic performance was showing "encouraging" signs.

Mr Smith talked about the success that direct selling company Amway, whose UK and Ireland headquarters are at Caldecotte, had seen over the last six months or so even in a time of recession. Mr Hawking updated Chamber members about plans for Milton Keynes to pilot a new project to test out how people would go about using electric vehicles in and around the city.



- Andy Smith (top) at the Chamber AGM. Elected: Linda Mansfield and Nicholas Mann have joined the Chamber board of directors.

