Press Release Thursday, May 25th2017

*Winners’ profiles in notes*

**Energy Tech Start-Up Wins National Enterprise Award**

***Taoiseach presents National Enterprise Awards with Minister Mitchell O’ Connor and Minister Breen***

***South Dublin-based energy tech company, supported by Local Enterprise Offices, wins overall National Enterprise Awards at gala event in Dublin’s Mansion House***

A start-up energy technology company from South Dublin has won the top award at this year’s National Enterprise Awards, which is organised by the Local Enterprise Offices every year to celebrate Ireland’s micro-enterprises (May 25th).

Set-up in 2015 and supported by Local Enterprise Office South Dublin, Acutrace has developed hardware and software that collects energy data in commercial buildings in the UK and Ireland. The company founders were presented with the National Enterprise Award by An Taoiseach, Mr. Enda Kenny T.D., the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Ms. Mary Mitchell O’ Connor T.D. and the Minister of State for Employment and Small Business, Pat Breen T.D. at a black-tie ceremony this evening in the Mansion House.

Another Dublin company, Hope Beer in Fingal, won the ‘Best Start-Up’ award, Hexafly in Meath took the award for ‘Innovation’ and Monaghan Brothers Bar Furniture Manufacturers Ltd from County Mayo won the ‘Best Export’ category.

The Taoiseach, Mr. Enda Kenny T.D. speaking at the Awards said: “Congratulations to all the micro-enterprises and small businesses that are being honoured and celebrated through the National Enterprise Awards this year. The winners here tonight are examples of the confidence, ambition and creative talent at Ireland’s core.”

He added: “Local Enterprise Offices exist to help small Irish companies starting out. Since the LEOs were established in 2014, they have supported in excess of 11,000 new jobs. We will continue to deliver on that potential, continue to unearth the new generation of entrepreneurs and continue to promote a culture of self-help and self-start, across every county, parish and community in Ireland. Unemployment has dropped from 15.4% to 6.4% in recent times and LEO offices have played their part in this. Jobs are now growing in every region in the country.”

Minister Mitchell O’ Connor said: “I am delighted to join An Taoiseach, Minister Breen and the Local Enterprise Offices to celebrate the outstanding entrepreneurial achievements of Ireland’s micro and small businesses at the National Enterprise Awards. My priority as Minister is to ensure that an environment exists that nurtures entrepreneurship, innovation and job creation in every part of Ireland. The Local Enterprise Offices are a key element of that supportive environment and I would like to pay tribute to their vision and hard work.

“Heartiest congratulations to all of the winners tonight, and to all of the participants in this year’s competition who are an inspiration to others to consider entrepreneurship as a career”.

Minister Breen said: “National Enterprise Awards showcase Ireland’s most innovative micro-enterprises and small businesses, putting their stories of success into the national spotlight. As Minister for Small Business, I want to do everything I can to help nurture Ireland’s entrepreneurial potential and to help more people start-up and grow their own business across every region. I would like to join An Taoiseach and Minister Mitchell O’ Connor in adding my gratitude and congratulations to all of this year’s participants, finalists and winners, who are representing the 31 Local Enterprise Offices here in the Mansion House.”

Eight regional awards were also presented at the ceremony this evening and the winners were:

* Acutrace in South Dublin (for the Dublin Region)
* Irish Host Family Ltd in Kerry (for the South West Region)
* Broghies Ireland in Kildare (for the Mid East Region)
* Pip and Pear Chilled Baby Food in Waterford (for the South Region)
* Goldfish.ie in Wicklow (for the South East Region)
* Studyclix in Sligo (for the North West Region)
* Aphix Software Ltd in Louth (for the North East Region)
* 9th Impact in Galway City (for the West Region)

Speaking at the awards ceremony, Sheelagh Daly, Chair of the Network of the Local Enterprise Offices said: “Acutrace started-up just two years ago and already the company is making its mark on the international energy management sector, having worked on more than 50 projects for companies like Google, Twitter and IBM. Micro-enterprises like Acutrace, which make up more than 90% of all businesses in Ireland, are powering the national economy with the Local Enterprise Offices as their ‘first-stop-shop’ for accessing enterprise supports. The National Enterprise Awards are a celebration of courage, vision and success behind Ireland’s micro-enterprises .”

Oisin Geoghegan, Chair of the National Enterprise Awards’ organising committee, delivered the closing address at this evening’s ceremony, confirming that the award winners share a €40,000 prize fund from the Local Enterprise Offices, to help fund expansion and further growth.

The judges this year were Michael Hanley (former Head of Enterprise with Local Enterprise Office Cork North and West), Barry Egan (Regional Director with Enterprise Ireland) and Anne Cusack (entrepreneur and founder of Critical Healthcare in Westmeath, a medical emergency product supplier).

Previous winners of the National Enterprise Awards have included Applied Concepts in Offaly, Agrispread in Mayo, Innovate in Wexford and Irish Yoghurts in West Cork.

The full list of results and details about the supports available to micro-enterprises and start-ups through the network of Local Enterprise Offices can be found at [www.localenterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie).

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**Photography note**: Photocall Ireland have been commissioned by the Local Enterprise Offices to syndicate reproduction-free images from the 2017 National Enterprise Awards. Please request these through Photocall Ireland.

**Confirmation of Winners: 2017 National Enterprise Awards (#NEAwards)**

*Organised by the Local Enterprise Offices in local authorities (*[*www.localenterprise.ie*](http://www.localenterprise.ie)*), and supported by Enterprise Ireland and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation*

**Overall Winner & Regional Award Winner (Dublin Region)**

**Acutrace (supported by LEO South Dublin)** is a start-up energy management company, whichhas developed software and hardware for the collection of data in Commercial and Industrial buildings. This software allows users to measure, visualise, analyse and control their energy costs. Acutrace has completed projects in Google, Twitter, IBM, Irish Aviation Authority and The Leadenhall Building. The company started up in 2015 and is now ready to launch its software products into eleven countries throughout Europe.

**Number of Staff:** 5 (full-time)
**Promoters:** Aidan McDonnell & JohnLynch **E:** aidan@acutrace.com **W:** [www.acutrace.com](http://www.acutrace.com)

**Category Winners**

**Best-Start Up Category Winner Hope Beer (supported by LEO Fingal)** brews a range of award-winning craft beers from their environmentally-friendly state of the art micro-brewery at Howth Junction. The team has applied their passions for brewing and business management since successfully starting in early 2016, and are now selling nationally and entering export markets in 2017. They brew pale ales, lager, sours and stout, named after adventurous characters from the past. Their niche in the drinks sector is beer and food pairing. Their primary target is the dining market, including social clubs and restaurants.
**Number of Staff:** 5 (full-time) and 1 (part-time)
**Promoter:** Wim de Jongh **E:** wim@hopebeer.ie **W:** [www.hopebeer.ie](http://www.hopebeer.ie)

**Innovation Award Category Winner**

Toggam Enterprises Ltd, trading as **Hexafly (supported by LEO Meath)**, supplies sustainable natural commodities to the animal feed, plant nutrition and Bio-polymer industries. They do this by using insects to up-cycle vegetation into proteins, oils, fertilizers and chitin. The company is currently partnering with multinationals, such as Diageo and Nutreco as both customers and suppliers, and various international governmental organizations from Africa to China.

**Number of Staff:** 4 (full-time) and 1 (part-time)

**Promoter:** Alvan Hunt **E:** alvan@hexafly.co **W:** [www.hexafly.co](http://www.hexafly.co)

**Best Export Award Category Winner**

**Monaghan Bros Bar Furniture Manufacturers Ltd (supported by LEO Mayo)** was set up by four brothers in rural Mayo in 1987. From its factory in Claremorris, the company manufactures custom-made furniture for world hospitality markets, such as the US, UK, Japan and Australia. With a new exclusive distribution agreement for the US due to be signed in 2017, the company makes furniture for organisations and companies such as Yale University, Applegreen, SuperMacs and the Delata Hotel Group.

**Number of Staff:** 10 (full-time), 3 (full-time temporary) and 2 (part-time)

**Promoters:** Peter, Michael, Paddy & Richard Monaghan.

**E** monaghanbros@eircom.net **W:** [www.barfurniture.net](http://www.barfurniture.net)

**Regional Award Winners**

**Dublin Regional Winner and Overall Winner**

**Acutrace (supported by LEO South Dublin)** is a start-up energy management company, whichhas developed software and hardware for the collection of data in Commercial and Industrial buildings. This software allows users to measure, visualise, analyse and control their energy costs. Acutrace has completed projects in Google, Twitter, IBM, Irish Aviation Authority and The Leadenhall Building. The company started up in 2015 and is now ready to launch its software products into eleven countries throughout Europe.

**Number of Staff:** 5 (full-time)
**Promoters:** Aidan McDonnell & JohnLynch **E:** aidan@acutrace.com **W:** [www.acutrace.com](http://www.acutrace.com)

**South West Regional Winner**

**Irish Host Family Ltd (supported by LEO Kerry)** provides European students with the opportunity to perfect their language skills through an immersion programme with carefully-selected local families in the Castleisland region. The firm has recently purchased new premises in Listowel and is expanding into the provision of broader Language tuition and other training services.
**Number of Staff:** 2 (full-time) and 3 (part-time)
**Promoter**: Antoinette Butler  **E:** info@irishhostfamily.ie **W:** [www.irishhostfamily.ie](http://www.irishhostfamily.ie)

**Mid East Regional Winner**

**Broghies Ireland (supported by LEO Kildare)** produce and distribute Broghies, a healthy, low fat crispy, tasty and extremely versatile snack made from wheat. The food manufacturing business is expanding rapidly, with plans to develop new varieties of Broghies made with corn and chickpeas. Broghies Ireland supplies independent and major supermarket chains, with substantial sales already achieved in Ireland, with plans to expand to the UK and Europe.
**Number of Staff:** 9 (full-time)
**Promoter:** Martin Walsh **E:** jabroghies@outlook.com **W:** www.broghiesireland.com

**South Regional Winner**

**Pip and Pear Chilled Baby Food (supported by LEO Waterford)** provides a guilt-free alternative to homemade for time-pressed parents. The delicious and wholesome range is made in Ireland and caters for little ones from five months to three years of age. The chilled range is gently cooked using organic fruit and vegetables and Irish Bord Bia- approved meat and poultry. Dishes include: ‘Fishy Dishy,’ ‘Lamb Tagine,’ and ‘Lovely Lentils.’The company won the ‘Maternity and Infant Best Baby Food Award’ and ‘Blas na hEireann’ awards in 2015 and again in 2016.
**Number of Staff:** 4 (full-time)
**Promoter:** Irene Queally **E:** irene@pipandpear.ie **W:** [www.pipandpear.ie](http://www.pipandpear.ie)

**South East Regional Winner**

**Goldfish.ie (supported by LEO Wicklow)** provides cloud telecommunications services and contact centre management technology to businesses across Ireland, Europe and South East Asia. Nicknamed ‘The Goldfish Bowl’, its Greystones office has a team of nine engineers and account managers, providing assistance to over 6,000 companies across the world. Customers include: Dropbox, IDG Direct, SISK Group and Hello.ie.

**Number of Staff:** 9 (full-time)

**Promoter:** Gordon O’Neill **E:** gordon@goldfish.ie **W:** [www.goldfish.ie](http://www.goldfish.ie)

**North West Regional Winner**

**Studyclix.ie (supported by LEO Sligo),** set up in 2012, simplifies the e-learning process for second-level students and their teachers by breaking down each exam subject for the Junior Cert and Leaving Cert. It provides study aids and techniques, past exam papers and answers, worked solutions, flashcards, tutorial videos, discussion forums and blogs offering advice. It has over 100,000 registered students in Ireland and has recently launched in Australia. Expansion into the UK ‘GCSE’ and ‘A-Level’ market is planned for 2018.

**Number of Staff:** 2 (full-time) and 5 (part-time)

**Promoter:** Luke Saunders **E:** luke@studyclix.ie **W:** www.studyclix.ie

**North East Regional Winner**

**Aphix Software Ltd (supported by LEO Louth),** a Fintech software company, providesimple solutions for complex business. The company helps wholesale businesses grow revenues, reduce costs, enhance customer experience and scale globally using the world’s most secure and flexible eCommerce and mobile ordering platform. They make it easier for customers and their sales teams to place orders anytime, anywhere. The company’s software is used in Ireland, UK, Sweden, Netherlands and France.
**Number of Staff:** 10 (full-time)

**Promoter:** Graham O'Rourke **E:** graham@aphixsoftware.com **W:** [www.aphixsoftware.com](http://www.aphixsoftware.com)

**West Regional Winner**

**9th Impact (supported by LEO Galway)** design, build and publish games for mobile phones and specialise in negotiating partnerships with international TV studios to develop the official games of popular TV series. They are best known for developing the official games of the ‘Biker Mice from Mars’ TV series and in July 2017, the company will be releasing the official game for the ‘Danger Mouse’ TV series. The games are available in 12 languages are played in 119 countries. 98% of the company’s revenues are earned from exports by 7 highly-skilled full time staff in Galway.

**Number of Staff:** 7 (full-time)

**Promoter:** Mark Quick **E:** lordbusiness@9thimpact.com **W:** [www.9thimpact.com](http://www.9thimpact.com)

**Other Finalists**

**Dublin Region**

*Dublin (City)* Pink Kong Studios [www.pinkkongstudios.ie](http://www.pinkkongstudios.ie) Original story-driven animated content

*Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown* Moontour [www.moontour.ie](http://www.moontour.ie) Irish-language adventure camp

**South West Region**

*Clare* Core Optimisation Ltd www.coreoptimisation.com Digital growth specialists

*Limerick* Student Programmes Ireland Ltd [www.spil.ie](http://www.spil.ie) Tailormade education for European students

*Tipperary* MediSkin [www.mediskin.ie](http://www.mediskin.ie) Laser, skincare and wellbeing solutions

**Mid East Region**

*Laois* Infrastruct AMS Limited www.infrastruct.ie Structural testing and investigation services

*Offaly* Dezynamite www.dezynamite.com Graphic design, websites and printing

*Westmeath* Lift Hire Ireland [www.lifthireireland.com](http://www.lifthireireland.com) Van, truck and trailer-mounted lifts

**South Region**

*Cork (City)* Rebel Chilli www.rebelchilli.com Award-winning fresh chilli sauces

*Cork (N & W)* Enibas Jewellery www.enibas.com Designs and manufactures jewellery collections

*South Cork* Polar IceTech www.polaricetech.ie Dry ice blasting specialists

**South East Region**

*Carlow* McNally Denture Clinic www.mcnallydentureclinic.ie Full denture services and clinic

*Kilkenny* Greensbridge Engineering Ltd www.greensbridge.ie High-quality precision engineering

*Wexford* Scup Gelato www.scupgelato.com Handcrafted luxury gelatos and sorbets

**North West Region**

*Donegal* Silver Birch Gallery www.sharonmcdaid.com Original paintings, mixed-media and prints

*Leitrim* Jinny’s Bakery www.jinnysbakery.com Handmade bread, cakes and puddings

*Longford* Purpledecks Ltd. [www.purpledecks.com](http://www.purpledecks.com) Enterprise App developer and consultancy

**North East Region**

*Cavan* Moran's Megajam Ltd www.moranshomestore.com Artisan jams, chutneys and pestos

*Monaghan* RAMfit Ltd www.ramfit.com Training products for fitness

**West Region**

*Galway (County)* IMS Marketing www.imsmarketing.ie Dedicated technical marketing company

*Roscommon* PJ Fallon & Son www.pjfallon.ie Tools, garage and lifting equipment