**Press Release Monday, May 8th 2017**

**Local company on “countdown” to National Enterprise Awards Final**

***Minister Mitchell O’ Connor announces names of all National Enterprise Award finalists, including the Local Enterprise Office County/City nominee***

Polar IceTech Ltd from Midleton in County Cork, has been officially announced by the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mary Mitchell O’ Connor T.D. as a finalist in this year’s National Enterprise Awards.

Organised by the Local Enterprise Offices, the 2017 National Enterprise Awards celebrate the achievements of Ireland’s top small businesses and micro-enterprises from all parts of Ireland in a showcase of enterprise, innovation and ambition at Dublin’s Mansion House on May 25th.

Announcing the finalists, Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mary Mitchell O’Connor said: “Last week, we saw that Ireland’s unemployment rate has dropped to a new low of 6.2%. This is hugely encouraging, and it is due to the hard work and dedication of enterprise heroes such as these local businesses who are quite rightly taking their place in the spotlight at the National Enterprise Awards on May 25th.”

The Minister added: “These innovative businesses are led by people who are serious about their ambition, who are taking real risks and making real sacrifices to achieve success, and they are making a huge contribution to their local communities and to the economy at large. It is very important that we mark their achievements. I wish all of the finalists the very best of luck in the Final on the 25th May.”

The LEO South Cork finalist, Polar IceTech Ltd, was set up……… in and please insert company description. The company will be represented at the National Enterprise Awards on May 25th by Damien McDonnell.

The other finalists this year are drawn from diverse business sectors, such as skin-care, ice-cream making, language courses and mobile game development. The announcement of finalists was made at the Mansion House by Minister Mitchell O’ Connor, accompanied by Sheelagh Daly and Oisín Geoghegan representing the Local Enterprise Offices, Brendan Flood of Enterprise Ireland and last year’s Overall Winner, Mark Clendennen of Applied Concepts in Offaly.

Local Enterprise Office South Cork will be represented in the Mansion House by please insert name and title for your LEO representative. He/she said: “Small business and micro-enterprises, including please insert name of your finalist company, are making an outstanding contribution to our local economy. Last year, nearly 3,700 new jobs were created by over 6,800 micro-enterprises supported by LEOs all over the country. These entrepreneurs are continuously looking to grow by developing new products and services and investing in export markets. The National Enterprise Awards help torecognise the contribution that small businesses and micro-enterprises make to our communities every day.”

You may wish to insert a quote here from the Chief Executive of your Local Authority.

Last year’s winner, Applied Concepts in Birr, manufacture and export blast machines used in construction and renovation projects in countries such as Spain, Denmark and Chile.

If your LEO had any winners or category winners in the recent past, please mention them here. For example: In 2013, a local company scooped the ‘Innovation’ Award…..

Previous winners nationally have also included Irish Yoghurts, Innovate, Grouse Recording Studios, Simtech Aviation, MyBio and Design Pro.

The winners of this year’s National Enterprise Awards will be announced at the Mansion House in Dublin on Thursday, May 25th. Twelve awards will be presented including eight regional awards. The overall winner will receive €10,000 to invest in their business.

Competition updates and results will be available through [www.localenterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie) and by following #NEAwards on social media.

The Local Enterprise Offices are co-funded by the Irish Government and the European Regional Development Fund 2014-2020.

**ENDS**

**For all media enquiries, please contact your Local Enterprise Office**

**Notes to the Editor:**

The 2017 National Enterprise Awards, co-ordinated by the Local Enterprises, will take place on May 25th at the Mansion House in Dublin (evening event). Social Media: #NEAwards.

**NATIONAL FINALISTS IN 2017 (supported by their Local Enterprise Office)**

**LEO Area & Company Website**

**Carlow**McNally Denture Clinic [www.mcnallydentureclinic.ie](http://www.mcnallydentureclinic.ie/)

**Cavan**
Moran’s Megajam Ltd [www.moranshomestore.com](http://www.moranshomestore.com)

**Clare**
Core Optimisation Ltd www.coreoptimisation.com

**Cork (City)**
Rebel Chilli www.rebelchilli.com

**Cork (North & West)**
Enibas Jewellery www.enibas.com

**Cork (South)**
Polar IceTech [www.polaricetech.ie](http://www.polaricetech.ie)

**Donegal**
Sharon McDaid – Silver Birch Gallery & Studio www.sharonmcdaid.com

**Dublin (City)**
Pink Kong Studios www.pinkkongstudios.ie

**Dublin (DLR)**
Moontour www.moontour.ie

**Dublin (Fingal)**
Hope Beer www.hopebeer.ie

**Dublin (South)**
Acutrace [www.acutrace.com](http://www.acutrace.com)

**Galway (City)**
9th Impact www.9thimpact.com

**Galway (County)**IMS Marketing www.imsmarketing.ie

**Kerry**
Irish Host Family Ltd www.irishhostfamily.ie

**Kildare**
Broghies Ireland www.broghiesireland.com

**Kilkenny**
Greensbridge Engineering Ltd www.greensbridge.ie

**Laois**
Infrastruct AMS Limited www.infrastruct.ie

**Leitrim**
Jinny’s Bakery  www.jinnysbakery.com

**Limerick**
Student Programmes Ireland Ltd  www.spil.ie

**Longford**
Purpledecks Ltd. www.purpledecks.com

**Louth**
Aphix Software Ltd www.aphixsoftware.com

**Mayo**
Monaghan Bros Bar Furniture Manufacturers Ltd www.barfurniture.net

**Meath**
Hexafly www.hexafly.co

M**onaghan**
RAMfit Ltd www.ramfit.com

**Offaly**
Dezynamite www.dezynamite.com

**Roscommon**
PJ Fallon & Son www.pjfallon.ie

**Sligo**
Studyclix www.studyclix.ie

**Tipperary**
MediSkin www.mediskin.ie

**Waterford**
Pip and Pear Chilled Baby Food  www.pipandpear.ie

**Westmeath**
Lift Hire Ireland www.lifthireireland.com

**Wexford**
Scup Gelato   www.scupgelato.com

**Wicklow**
Goldfish.ie [www.goldfish.ie](http://www.goldfish.ie)

**Award Categories and Prize Fund – National Enterprise Awards 2017**

* Overall Winner, National Enterprise Awards 2017 (Cash Prize for business: €10,000)
* Best Export Business(Cash Prize for business: €5,000)
* Best Start Up Business (Cash Prize for business: €5,000)
* Innovation Award (Cash Prize for business: €5,000)
* Eight Regional Winners (Cash Prize for business: €2,000 each)
	+ ***Regions:***
	+ *Dublin City, Fingal, Dún Laoghaire- Rathdown and South Dublin*
	+ *Kildare, Laois, Offaly and Westmeath*
	+ *Wicklow, Wexford, Carlow and Kilkenny*
	+ *Louth, Meath, Cavan and Monaghan*
	+ *Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim and Longford*
	+ *Galway, Mayo and Roscommon*
	+ *Clare, Limerick, Kerry and Tipperary*
	+ *Cork City, South Cork, Cork North & West and Waterford*

**Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs)**
As part of a range of reforms carried out by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (DJEI) in recent years, the 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs) were established to provide a ‘first-stop shop’ system of enterprise supports to start-ups and small businesses across the country. Located in the Local Authorities, the LEOs are operated on a partnership basis by Enterprise Ireland and the Local Authorities and their parent Departments, DJEI and the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

The LEOs provide funding for projects primarily in the manufacturing and internationally traded services sector which over time have the potential to develop into strong export entities. There are three main categories of grant under which direct financial assistance is provided – Priming, Feasibility and Business Expansion. The LEOs also provide training and mentoring support to entrepreneurs and businesses to assist business development and performance.

Details on all the supports available for small businesses and micro-enterprises through all LEOs are available at [www.localenterprise.ie](http://www.localenterprise.ie/).