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falkirk BUSINESS IN

MY FUTURE'S IN FALKIRK AND BUSINESS NEWS ISSUE 5

Local hero

Malcolm Allan joins forces with Asda



From left: Stuart Ogg, Gordon Allan MAL MD and Stuart Morens.

FAMILY BUTCHER PROVES THE LOCAL INGREDIENT FOR RETAIL GIANT

Falkirk-based family butcher, Malcolm Allan Ltd, has joined forces with retail giant Asda to bring more fresh local produce to its stores.

In line with the growing emphasis on local sourcing and traceable produce, Asda has selected Malcolm Allan to operate a supply chain hub, opening trade opportunities for more than 20 food and drink manufacturers throughout the central belt of Scotland.

Supported by Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley, Malcolm Allan has already linked with more than 15 local businesses including Mathiesons Bakers, Traditional Scottish Ales in Bridge of Allan and Tilly Confectionery to coordinate a seamless supply of Scottish food products from local growers and manufacturers.

The approach is part of Asda's strategy to provide a strong local food offer with local sourcing seen as a major factor in achieving it.

Founded in 1954, Malcolm Allan has a strong track record of sales in

the region of £3million with Asda. Wholly owned by the family and run by brothers Gordon and James the business employs more than 90 people and has the right mix of knowledge and infrastructure to provide the ongoing support needed to join small producers with complex multiple retailers.

Gordon Allan, Malcolm Allan, managing director, said: "We had been benefiting from a fruitful relationship with Asda for some time so it only seemed natural to help open up the supply chain in the area to benefit some other local producers.

Forth Valley has some of the country's best food and drink manufacturers and Asda recognises that today's consumer wants fresh local produce that hasn't travelled the length and breadth of the country before it hits the shop shelves."

NEW OPPORTUNITIES, NEW JOBS

More than 700 jobs could be created on the site where aluminium was once milled in Falkirk.

The former Alcan site in Langlees is being transformed into what will become a thriving, modern industrial estate by Falkirk Council and Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley.

The project, which won £1 million support from the European Regional Development Fund, is expected to bring £50 million of private investment to the area.

Work is progressing quickly on the site where plots of up to 50,000 sq metres of new modern industrial and commercial units are planned along with new access roads, a roundabout and infrastructure services.

In its prime, the Alcan site employed more than 2000 people and the cold rolling mill produced 60,000 tons of aluminium annually. In World War II it made sheet aluminium for RAF bombers and fighter planes.

“This is a major milestone in the development and provision of industrial premises in the Falkirk and Grangemouth area,” said Stuart Ogg, Operations Director SE Forth Valley. “The Alcan site has long been an important part of the community in Falkirk’s Dawson area and we are keen to see the land revitalised to benefit the local and Scottish economy.”

He went on: “Not only will this development provide valuable alternative industrial premises to satisfy the demand from existing and new businesses seeking to improve their productivity and output but it will contribute significantly to the regeneration initiative, My Future’s in Falkirk.”

Falkirk Council is contributing around £2 million towards the costs of clearing and decontaminating the site, part of an overall planned investment of £13 million in business property opportunities across the area.

“The plans for the Alcan site are at the centre of what will be a major investment in business property. By successfully developing our business property portfolio, we’ll ensure that businesses can grow and prosper in Falkirk leading to many new job opportunities for local people” said Councillor David Bryson, Convener of Economic Development.



The My Future’s in Falkirk initiative is transforming Falkirk and the surrounding area into a thriving, diverse economy that attracts businesses and visitors into the area and provides jobs for local people.

The initiative is public and private partnership driven by Falkirk Council, BP and Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley with support from the European Regional Development Fund and Ineos.

Visit www.myfuturesinfalkirk.co.uk for full details.



FUJIFILM INJECTS COLOUR INTO GRANGEMOUTH WITH £2.5M R&D PROJECTS

Global imaging company Fujifilm is set to expand its imaging colorants research and development centre in the heart of Scotland’s chemicals hub.

Two new research and development projects, supported by R&D Plus grants from Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley, have been developed since the business was acquired from Avecia in February 2006.

The newly named Fujifilm Imaging Colorants business (FFIC) is investing £2.5m to develop a new range of colours for laser printers and a special chemical drying process which is expected to create up to 7 new high value jobs.

FFIC’s Grangemouth site currently develops, manufactures and supplies colorants to major printer manufacturers as well as for the print consumables market. The Grangemouth site is FFIC’s global centre of excellence for colorants manufacturing and process technology.

Dr Laura Murphy of FFIC, said: “The print consumables market is constantly evolving. Development of a new product range and a constant focus on process efficiency are critical for FFIC to retain and grow its global market position.”

She added: “Scottish Enterprise’s R&D Plus assistance has helped expedite the progress on these projects bringing these new products one step closer to the marketplace.”



Dr Laura Murphy, FFIC

In the headlines

FORTH PORTS UNVEILS £40M GRANGEMOUTH MASTERPLAN

Forth Ports is to build a new £40m distribution hub at its key Grangemouth site, creating around 80 jobs and supporting 100 others during the construction phase. Plans for the distribution park follow the success of a 100,000sq ft warehouse built in 2004 which has since reached capacity and will soon be expanded by another 50,000sq ft.

The Scotsman, 28/9/06



RAIL LINK CUTS TESCO LORRIES

A freight train service which will cut 260 lorries a week from Scotland's roads is launched. All Tesco products will now come into Scotland by train to Grangemouth rather than by road in an agreement between the supermarket giant and the freight carrier Eddie Stobart.

The Scotsman, 19/9/06

VIBTECH SALE NETS REWARDS FOR BACKERS

Falkirk based Vibtech, the oil exploration technology company, has been bought by a French rival in a deal thought to be worth more than £32m.

The Scotsman, 26/10/06

BO'NESS BEATS ALL COMERS AS BEST BET FOR FIRST-TIME HOUSE BUYERS

First-time buyers eager to get a foot on the property ladder should head for Bo'ness (on the River Forth) according to a report by the Royal Bank of Scotland.

It has been ranked number one in Scotland for affordability and investment potential, and number two in the whole of the UK. A low average house price at under £100,000 and regeneration plans for the town centre have earned its reputation as a property hotspot.

The Scotsman, 13/9/06



McCOWAN WORKERS WILL GET JOBS BACK

Workers at Millar McCowan who were axed when the Highland Toffee bar-maker collapsed are to be offered their jobs back. The business has been sold from administration to Principal Capital Management, the specialist confectionery investment company. The deal means the resumption of production at Millar McCowan's sites at Stenhousemuir and Broxburn.

The Herald, 26/8/06

SOCCER STAR KICKS OFF RESTAURANT PLAN

Gretna striker Kenny Deuchar has joined forces with his dad, Dr Robert Deuchar, to build a new restaurant, called The Wheelhouse, on the outskirts of Camelon (close to The Falkirk Wheel site). This restaurant is expected to open by December 11 and once finished, it will seat around 250 people with a garden area for al fresco dining catering for 100 more. Around 40-50 staff will be employed.

Falkirk Herald, 11/5/06

NEW BUSINESS HEAD TAKES OVER

Douglas Duff has started work as Falkirk Council's head of economic development. Mr Duff (48) previously worked as regeneration manager for South Lanarkshire Council.

Falkirk Herald, 31/8/06

HELIX Shaping Up Nicely For Falkirk!

Plans to transform a vacant 300 hectare site between Grangemouth and Falkirk into a thriving environmental community took another step forward recently (Aug) with the news that the Big Lottery Fund has awarded The HELIX project a development grant of up to £250,000, as part of its Living Landmarks programme.

They are amongst 23 projects across the UK that have made it on to the shortlist to compete for a small number of grants of between £10 million and £25 million each.

The second stage funding will allow partners in the project to develop a full scale submission next year that could see over £40m investment in the area as the site is developed.

Once completed, The HELIX would offer 34 km of paths and cycle networks; see 750,000 trees planted, five new biodiversity nature parks, create employment through community enterprise businesses and support new 'micro' businesses.

£1.5m Investment in Business Space for Grangemouth

Grangemouth is set for a £1.5m investment in the first phase of a new office development being led by Falkirk Council that could see up to 80 jobs created in the town.

The first of three new office pavilions will kick start development in the town's Wholeflats area to help meet business property needs.

Once complete the development will provide 3000m² of modern, fit for purpose office space constructed over three phases and is part of the wider £13m Portfolio Management Plan announced by the Council earlier this year.

Cllr David Bryson, Convener of the Economic Development Committee said: "Recent surveys have shown that while there is considerable demand for this type of property in the area, there simply isn't the office accommodation needed to cope with business start up, expansion and the interest from companies who see Falkirk as an excellent place to do business."

Work starts on Scotland's £50m specialist chemical and manufacturing park



Work has commenced to develop what will become one of Scotland's most advanced and integrated specialist industrial parks for chemical, technology and manufacturing companies.

Earls Gate Park, a £50m joint-arrangement development between Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley and international chemical company KemFine, will provide unique accommodation for up to 20 businesses in the Grangemouth area.

The first phase of infrastructure work started in June with a new site access road being built. The 30 acre development has been hailed as a unique offering in Scotland due to utilities which will be available to tenants such as KemFine's state of the art effluent treatment plant and combined heat and power station with motorway, rail and sea access.

The project is expected to help safeguard the future of 650 existing jobs at the current companies operating on KemFine's Grangemouth site with the potential to create up to 950 new jobs on the site.

A new heart for Stenhousemuir

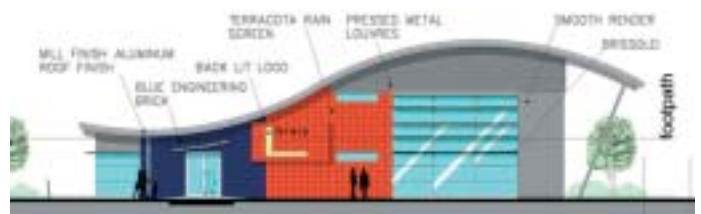
Falkirk Council approves multi-million pound town centre regeneration plan.

Stenhousemuir is to have a new 40,000 sq.ft Asda foodstore, shops and a library following a recent decision by Falkirk Council's Regulatory Committee to grant detailed planning approval to developers MacDonald Estates plc.

MacDonald Estate's application covers a 6.48 hectare site and includes:

- a 40,000 sq.ft. foodstore with 360 parking spaces
- more than 34,000 sq.ft of retail space in three single-storey blocks
- a new library
- landscaped civic spaces
- a new access road off the B905 (King Street)
- a new football pitch and changing rooms
- improvements to Crownest Park

Niall McLean, Development Manager for MacDonald Estates plc said: "We are delighted to see our plans for Stenhousemuir town centre coming to fruition. In addition to securing the anchor tenant, we have substantially let the retail accommodation and pulled together an extremely complicated site assembly exercise. We can now start to make a change for the better in Stenhousemuir. Construction is due to start later this year and it is anticipated that the project will be completed within two years."



Visit myfuturesinfalkirk.co.uk for information/news on all projects



Talkback

STEVEN McLEOD

MANAGING DIRECTOR & OWNER,
AIRTH CASTLE HOTEL & SPA

Favourite city?

London as I love the buzz and banter, lifestyle and the people - a great place if you move a million miles an hour!

Favourite place?

I do like Forth Valley as my home where there are great opportunities, great people, mass potential - so watch this space...

Favourite book?

"Made in America", Sam Walton's biography about the story of Wal-Mart.

I was given this book by a close business friend and having read it, I'm totally fascinated with the story of the biggest retail chain in world - a very interesting journey to the top.

Best piece of business advice

Always start with great people, tell them the rules from day one, black and white, no grey areas, communicate regularly with them, motivate, reward and care for them. If you do these things effectively you won't lose.

Always walk into a room as if you own the place!

Hobbies?

Haa Haa... What are Hobbies??

Work- my biggest hobby - I love it. I have world class people in my team and if they want my time, chat, laughter or advice then they get it, whenever they like, night or day. They are very interesting people and the best.

What makes your blood boil?

People who waste my time with trivia and fiction. Unless it's the facts, don't even bother coming near me. Always be black and white - I will and people respect it.

What makes you happy and contented?

Life!! I'm on a high, making my brain exhausted. Getting a discount on anything I buy and keeping people on their toes constantly.

In one sentence, what piece of advice could you offer to a new business?

Do your own thing, be you, be daring and be different. There are loads of people who will always come up with reasons why you can't do what you want to do - ignore them!

Careful plans or big risks?

A combination of balancing both but more on the big risks end of the scale. If I don't take a risk then I can risk even more. Take risks, take big risks, be calculated, be afraid and be in the driving seat.

What has been the most difficult hurdle to overcome in business and how did you do it?

Being lonely. It can be a lonely world until you learn who you really are and the saying 'trust nobody' sprung to mind initially for me.

Surround yourself with the best ambassadors in business and in your personal life you can find and treat them like family. Look after them, take them on every step of the journey, in the end they will be right by your side when you really need them.

Which famous person do you most admire and why?

Alan Sugar, take a bow! Self-made man, multi-millionaire, amazing entrepreneur, bolshie, brutal, arrogant, assertive, true, genuine, caring - total respect from me to him.

Biggest fear?

I'm not afraid of anything, never have been and never will be.

Best deal?

Buying Glenberrie House in Larbert. A great opportunity to create one of Scotland's finest luxury hotels from nothing, and another thriving business in Falkirk, something to be proud of!

In a perfect world...

We could just clone ourselves and we would be able to achieve so much more, so quickly. A bag of Haribo wine gums would be non-fattening and last longer and queues would not exist.



THE FALKIRK BUSINESS PANEL

Working together for the future of the Falkirk area; creating a strong local economy

BEAN THERE AND DONE IT!

Entrepreneur Gordon Richardson visited Falkirk in October to share some of his expertise in setting up one of Scotland's most innovative leisure businesses.

Founder and owner of Beanscene, Scotland's fast-growing chain of neighbourhood coffee and music shops, Gordon shared some of his business insight with business leaders from across Falkirk who are members of the Falkirk Business Panel.

The two hour session at Callendar House was part of the 'Talk Business' programme that brings respected business pioneers and entrepreneurs to Falkirk to share their ideas.

Richard Bell Managing Director of the Falkirk Herald said 'This was the first Business Panel event I have attended and I was very impressed. Gordon Richardson was very inspiring, he had a clear vision and knew exactly where he was trying to take his business. If this is the calibre of the Business Panel events, I will certainly be attending further events.'

RIGHT: GORDON RICHARDSON



CONNECTIONS

PROFESSIONAL business, fast growing, likes profit, publicity, sales, seeks article in Business Page.

No. MFIF56

GOOD looking business, in shape, 3YR old, outgoing, commercial, seeks nice press coverage for recent award.

No. MFIF10

BUSINESS start up, seeks PR for innovative product, service and hopefully more.

No. MFIF88

Have you won a contract or award recently, done a deal or expanded your workforce?

Why not share your successes and raise your company's profile?

To get your story included in the My Future's in Falkirk Business Page in the *Falkirk Herald* simply email details to yournews@myfuturesinfalkirk.co.uk



JOIN FALKIRK BUSINESS PANEL

The concept of 'creating opportunity' is one of the fundamental elements of the My Future's in Falkirk initiative which aims to transform the local economy into a thriving, diverse and modern economy, complete with the range of benefits and challenges that this process of transformation brings.

The Falkirk Business Panel creates a focal point that bridges the traditionally perceived (often merely illusory) gap between the business agenda and the public sector organisations that are actively involved in shaping the future of the area. Membership provides access not only to local development updates, but also the opportunity to share views and ideas with other key stakeholders and decision makers.

Those businesses that have elected to get actively involved in the debate and/or who have attended any of the events will already know that the Falkirk area and the wider Forth Valley area generally, are continuing to develop rapidly far beyond our historic legacy as a place of industry and strategic significance, geographically at the centre of the country.

From its earliest stage of development, the Business Panel has offered a range of local businesses (regardless of size and sector focus) the chance to engage in discussions that shape the local economic agenda. The Business Panel provides an opportunity to participate in a positive way to issues that affect not only business interests, but also the interests of the wider community of which the business community forms part. The size and scale of the opportunity that is before us all is in our view not in question - the measure and means of our collective success will be the extent to which the local business community choose to get involved to help capitalise on the excellent ground work that has been done to date and to help shape the future development of the area.

Douglas Cameron
FALKIRK BUSINESS PANEL

To join Falkirk Business Panel contact David Moffat, Economic Development Manager Falkirk Council, on **01324 59 0963** or david.moffat@falkirk.gov.uk. Falkirk Business Panel is a Falkirk Council and Scottish Enterprise Forth Valley initiative.



METROPOLITAN REGION APPROACH WILL REAP DIVIDENDS FOR FALKIRK

STUART OGG, SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE FORTH VALLEY

Some readers may have picked up on recent newspaper articles about the emergence of a new approach to economic development in Scotland. There is a growing awareness around the world that the future economic success of countries is closely bound up with the success of their main city regions. The level of debate about this issue especially within the business and political arenas is growing.

City regions and their contribution to national economic growth is not a new concept. It is one that has been widely applied in other European locations and in the rest of the UK. The Northern Way project launched a few years ago aims to focus on the synergies between the major cities and their hinterlands across northern England. In Scotland the Scottish Executive's economic development strategy when it was re-launched in 2004 gave greater emphasis to the geography of economic development. In addition the Scottish Executive's City Growth Fund has already been used to support some important projects aimed at strengthening the economic performance of Scotland's cities.

The Scottish Enterprise network has adopted a metropolitan approach to focus its resources on helping to meet the demands of the key priority industries which have growth potential and already have key strengths in Scotland. Within the context of this new approach areas such as Falkirk could be well positioned to benefit from this new approach.

Metropolitan region working is about developing the scale needed to help Scotland compete at an international level and at the same time ensuring all areas of Scotland can play their part in this process. The approach is predicated on the evidence that scale and concentrations of competitive assets are of paramount importance to the overall economic performance of a nation. These concentrations include knowledge assets such as Universities and Colleges, high value business activities such as those found in the headquarters of major companies, pools of skilled workers, hubs for transportation networks, centres of cultural attractions, and so on.

One of the main reasons for adopting this new approach is to find new and more effective ways of addressing Scotland's productivity gap in comparison with some of the other most successful European metropolitan regions. In order to narrow this gap the city region approach will focus on the areas most likely to boost Scotland's growth.

Nationally we need to generate an extra £10 billion in productivity improvements per year to bridge the gap, a major challenge for everyone.

Falkirk and the other parts of Forth Valley are ideally placed to contribute to this agenda. Thanks to its close proximity to Glasgow and Edinburgh, the area already provides an alternative location for businesses and people to relocate to while the uniqueness, accessibility and diversity of the area adds to Scotland's offering globally. Thanks to the My Future's in Falkirk initiative the foundations have been laid, the partnerships and projects in place to ensure that the area will not be left behind and will be ready, willing and able to exploit the benefits from this city region perspective. We just need to raise our sights that little bit higher to see how we play into this wider agenda.

Improving connections across the city regions will be one of the important dimensions of the new approach, allowing the free flow of people and goods. Again investments like the new Kincardine Bridge and Alloa and Stirling Rail link will help improve these connections. Opening up the area to more employment opportunities, enabling flexibility for in and out commuters, as well as encouraging increased inward investment by international companies and increasing visitor numbers are all important. To make all these work we need effective connections across the region and with our neighbours.

Alongside good communication links at this level we also need to ensure we continue to have a land supply that can complement the area's central location and accessibility. Fortunately there are already a number of high profile and high impact property projects across Falkirk, Grangemouth and Bo'ness including the development of the former Alcan site and the Earls Gate development. These will serve the area well for businesses seeking a central location to help service the growth of the city regions.

The metropolitan region approach is a new way of stimulating a strong competitive Scottish economy - it is now clear that Scotland's regions need to work together to provide the skilled workforce, the competitive infrastructure and entrepreneurial spirit through complementary activities that will ultimately help to resolve the country's productivity challenge.

