

BIG IT UP BULLETIN

Major news and updates for Leicester and Leicestershire

February 2009

Here is the latest update for Big It Up campaigners on major projects and good news stories for Leicester and Leicestershire, brought to you by Leicester Shire Promotions.

If you have any more Big It Up stories to tell of how you, your colleagues or organisation have championed the cause of Leicester and Leicestershire, please feed appropriate details through to Simon Gribbon at Leicester Shire Promotions on 0116 225 4001 or email simon.gribbon@l-p-l.com

Investors show faith in Leicestershire property

Commercial property investment doubled to £220 million in Leicestershire last year, despite a regional and national slump. The figures for 2008 included four deals of £25 million or more - among them was the £32 million purchase of Leicester's St George's Retail Park by the asset management arm of JP Morgan. In the East Midlands as a whole, major property investment totalled £700 million in 2008 - a 49 per cent decline on the year before. The figures were disclosed by commercial property agency Innes England. Property investment across the UK as a whole fell by 56 per cent last year.

Phoenix Square revealed

The name for Leicester's flagship new digital media centre has been revealed - it will be known as Phoenix Square. The new £21 million building in the heart of the city's Cultural Quarter is set to open this autumn and will include three cinema screens, business space for 37 new creative businesses and new apartments. The Phoenix Square name was chosen to continue the legacy of the popular Phoenix Arts Centre, in Newarke Street, which the new building will take over from and expand upon with a huge range of state-of-the-art facilities.

imago is finalist at national tourism awards

Loughborough-based business conference centre, imago, has made it through to the final of the VisitBritain's prestigious Enjoy England Awards for Excellence. imago has been nominated in the Business Tourism Award category and initially battled through regionally at the East Midlands Enjoy England Excellence Awards. The national tourism awards ceremony, which is now in its 20th year, will recognise the crème de la crème of the regional winners.

Pick Everard in line for major award

A local firm of architects is in the running for a top design award. Pick Everard, based in Leicester city centre, is one of the finalists for the 2009 Design and Architecture Award for its work on Orbis Energy, a £9 million building in Lowestoft, Suffolk. The awards are being organised by UK magazine, Sustain. Orbis Energy, which opened last autumn, has been praised for the way it saves energy, and includes natural ventilation and solar-powered heating.

Science Park bid 'could bring 3,500 jobs to Leicestershire'

3,500 science park jobs could be on their way to Leicestershire. Plans for a multi-million pound science and enterprise park, with up to 3,000 posts, could be approved. A further 500 jobs could be created if Leicestershire is picked to build the next generation of high-speed trains. Loughborough University wants to develop the 26-acre science park on land near its campus. Meanwhile, Ashby was yesterday shortlisted as a location for a factory supplying and maintaining the fleet of trains for the East Coast Mainline. The town is on a shortlist with Gateshead and Sheffield after British-led consortium Agility Trains won a £7.5 billion contract to supply the 'super express' trains.

Electric bike firm in line for eco-prize

A firm that developed an electric bike is in the running for a prize recognising businesses for helping to tackle climate change. Walters Innovations from Leicester is one of nine finalists from across central England and Wales on the shortlist for the Shell Springboard Awards. Walters Innovations has developed the MonVal Bicycle; a pedal-bike with a battery pack which is could power a journey of up to 40 miles.

Brewing up more support

Pubs are being urged to back Leicestershire's small breweries by pledging to have at least one local ale on tap. The move is part of a campaign called LocAle, being organised by the Leicester branch of the Campaign for Real Ale (Camra). More than 80 beers from 33 breweries which are within a 25-mile radius of the city centre are featured in the campaign. They include eight in Leicestershire and two in Rutland.

Winner of a top national food award

Dickinson & Morris is celebrating after winning a prestigious award at The Grocer Branded Excellence Awards. The six pack mini Melton Mowbray Pork Pies landed the top spot in the Chilled Foods - Savoury Cold category, whilst another Dickinson & Morris product, the Ultimate Cranberry Topped Pork Pie, was also commended by being shortlisted for the same award. The annual awards recognise the most outstanding products in the branded food market.

Twycross Zoo is awarded East Midlands' Favourite Family Day Out

Twycross Zoo has been awarded the East Midlands' Favourite Family Day Out accolade. The second Lifestyle Awards were hosted by the Heart 106 presenters and sponsored by eleven companies. The prestigious awards have grown to include a wider variety of nominees from across the region and the new East Midlands Favourite Family Day Out category was suggested by Heart's audience.

Bollywood comes to Leicester

Filming of an action thriller starring Shilpa Shetty will take place at locations around Leicester in the next few weeks. The Bollywood movie, which has the working title *The Man*, will be directed by award-winning Bollywood director, Sunny Deol. Those involved in the project have said that Leicester's involvement in the film would help celebrate its status as a multicultural city. More than 100 cast and crew members will be based in the city.

Applications to Leicestershire universities rocket

The number of students applying to study full-time courses at Loughborough University has increased by 19 per cent, according to the latest statistics released by UCAS. The rise, which is significantly greater than the national average of 7.8 per cent, puts Loughborough among the top ten universities in the UK for applications. Loughborough has also seen the largest increase of the East Midlands' universities.

Applications for courses at De Montfort University, Leicester (DMU) have also increased by 14.5 per cent. Applications to the University show a significant increase across a broad range of subjects including Accounting, Psychology, Law, Design and Media Studies. This news comes just after DMU announced outstanding results in the recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) which rated nearly half of the University's research as 'internationally excellent' or 'world leading'.

Student application figures at the University of Leicester have also rocketed. Leicester applications were 16 per cent higher than last year. That means that almost 20,000 students will chase 2,500 places at the University. Applications from Home and EU students for undergraduate (UG) study are up by 14 per cent and overseas by 48 per cent. Post graduate taught (PGT) applications are also strong with an increase of 14 per cent from home/EU students and 77 per cent from overseas, an increase of 69 per cent overall.

Finalists for Leicestershire Business Awards 2009 announced

15 finalist companies are now facing a nerve-wracking wait before winners of the seven Awards and the mighty Leicestershire Business of the Year accolade are announced. Judges will now visit each of the finalists to see how the businesses work day-to-day. The shortlisted companies are now eagerly awaiting the Gala Dinner in April crossing their fingers that they might be the Leicestershire Business of the Year winner.

Six students recruited to new Nike campaign

Six Loughborough University students have been recruited by Nike as ambassadors to help empower women and girls in sport. Gemma Hillier, Liu Batchelor, Catherine Clark-Field, Emma Moutrie, Kathryn Taylor and Jasmine Scott were named Nike Selects following a series of roadshows across the UK and Ireland. The Nike selectors sought out ambitious, stylish and inspirational young women, who are passionate about sport and live their lives with the strength and confidence sport gives them. Loughborough's six make up the largest number from any one University.

Space engineers from India work with University of Leicester

India's first national Astronomy satellite - Astrosat - is to have key components assembled by the University of Leicester. A team of engineers from the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Mumbai, visited the University of Leicester's Space Research Centre to progress work on the satellite which is due for launch later on this year. The team worked on the next phase of the mission, when hardware manufactured in India arrives in Leicester for inspection, testing and assembly into a space qualified X-ray camera.

Students' futuristic wedding dresses in line for top bridal design awards

Fashion and Couture Design students at Leicester's De Montfort University, Astra Slater and Suzannah Leigh, have been shortlisted as finalists in the 2009 Bridal Buyer Awards, organised by Bridal Buyer magazine. The event is a highlight on the industry's calendar and is regarded as Europe's top bridal awards ceremony. Astra and Suzannah have been selected among nine finalists for the Best Student Designer category for their futuristic wedding dress designs.

Local designers helping to promote world-renowned brands

A design firm is working with a premium cosmetics brand to raise its profile in hundreds of stores across the country. Design4retail (d4r) in Lutterworth developed a counter tester unit for YSL Beauté to promote its three best-selling products. The display is being used in about 350 stores.

'Team Leicestershire' to pitch hotel giants at Cannes property show

Major hotel companies will be asked to consider building a prestigious hotel in Leicester city centre as part of a marketing push at the world's biggest property fair. Team Leicestershire, a local consortium of representatives from the city council, Leicester Regeneration Company, Leicester Shire Promotions and Leicester Shire Economic Partnership, will attend the four-day event in March. Team Leicestershire is hoping to impress some of the potential developers at the MIPIM show in Cannes. The team will also be seeking developers for the next phase of the Business Quarter office development next to the railway station, and the new Leicester Science Park, near the National Space Centre.

Leicester companies win £500,000 of London contracts

Developers of a product which claims to save money on sending mail say it has generated business worth more than £500,000 in the space of a few months. The Harley Medical Group and a London housing association are among a number of national organisations using the Unity system, which was developed by two Leicester companies. It works by allowing customers to send their post through the internet to a hub at direct mail specialist GI Direct, in Leicester, where it is printed out, automatically put into envelopes and mailed.

And finally...

The Big It Up Bulletin is produced in conjunction with Leicester Mercury's 'The Business' supplement. For the latest business news in Leicester and Leicestershire, visit www.thisisbusiness-eastmidlands.co.uk/News/Leicestershire.aspx