



**Aberdeen &
Grampian
Chamber of
Commerce**

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Media Release

EMBARGOED UNTIL 23:30 THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2016

Please observe this strict embargo, and we ask that you do not contact ANY of the winners or finalists in advance

Thursday, September 22, 2016

Education leader honoured at Northern Star Business Awards

A retiring college principal was handed a lifetime achievement award at tonight's Northern Star Business Awards for his outstanding contribution to the region.

Rob Wallen, principal and chief executive of North East Scotland College (NESCol), has been with the college for 25 years and announced his retirement earlier in the year

NESCol has a major economic impact in the North East - £406.4million per annum, delivered from the £33.1million per annum invested by the government. Aberdeen College merged with Banff & Buchan College three years ago to become NESCol and Rob was appointed principal and chief executive.

Organised by Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce and now in their thirteenth year, the Northern Star Business Awards recognise companies in the North-east for their exceptional accomplishments across a range of fields from energy to innovation, people development to customer service.

Thirty-nine finalists joined the 700 guests at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre, all eager to find out who would lift the award in each of the 13 award categories.

Winner of one of the top awards on the evening was Balmoral Group, which received the Overall Business of the Year award.

From 2010 to 2015, the company has more than doubled its turnover to £136.5million and almost tripled pre-tax profit to £31.9million.

Having worked through previous oil price drops, Balmoral is benefiting from its commitment to lean manufacturing. It says that efficiency has always been a priority and this has helped it weather the storm.

Chief executive of the Chamber Russell Borthwick said, “The Chamber is committed to celebrating business success.

“This is something that’s even more important when times are tough and it’s incumbent on all of us to accentuate the positive to offset the predominantly negative messaging that the outside world is currently receiving about Aberdeen.

“Despite the difficult economic climate, Northern Star entry levels remained high in terms of quantity but most importantly quality, making these awards a true benchmark of business excellence in North-east Scotland.”

The winners in the 13 categories were as follows:

- Lifetime Achievement
 - Rob Wallen, North East Scotland College
- Achievement in International Business
 - John Ross Jr
- Best Campaign of the year
 - Tricker PR
- Commitment to Innovative Use of Research & Development
 - COREX UK Ltd
- Commitment to People Development
 - Scarf
- Excellence in Customer Service
 - Thorpe Molloy
- Excellence in Health & Safety
 - Sodexo Energy and Resources
- Outstanding Contribution to Society
 - Score Europe
- Outstanding Contribution to the Energy Sector
 - FIS Chemicals
- Overall Business of the Year
 - Balmoral Group
- Rising Star

- Stuart Common, Mackie's of Scotland
- Student Placement
 - Aberdeenshire Council
- The Green Award
 - Deeside Activity Park

Ends

Notes to editor

- Newswire are at the awards and can supply a picture of Rob Wallen by 8.45pm this evening (01224 594000).
- Rob Wallen, principal and chief executive of North East Scotland College, joined the college 25 years ago and had announced his retirement earlier this year. Before joining Aberdeen College, Rob - who has degrees in English literature and applied linguistics - had worked in secondary, further and higher education in Egypt, China and England. Three years ago, Aberdeen College merged with Banff & Buchan College to become North East Scotland College (NESCol) and Rob was appointed principal and chief executive. NESCol has a major economic impact in the North East - £406.4million per annum, delivered from the £33.1million per annum invested by the Government and a far greater return on investment than is usually achieved from government expenditure. Rob was born in London and educated at William Ellis Grammar School in Highgate. He achieved a first class BA degree in English and Related Literature from York University, and an MA in Second Language Learning & Teaching from London University, as well as various professional and vocational qualifications. Since 1991 held posts as Head of Quality Assurance, Associate Principal (Curriculum and Student Services) and Director of Learning & Teaching, before being appointed to the post of Principal & Chief Executive in 2009. He was for some years a member of the Board of the Scottish Further Education Unit and of Aberdeen Foyer, and chaired the Beattie Resources for Inclusiveness in Technology and Education committee and the North Forum for Widening Participation. He has been since 2000 a member for the Scottish Qualifications Authority Qualifications Committee.
- Attached is a copy of the Northern Star Business Awards logo.
- Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce (AGCC) is North-east Scotland's leading private sector, member-focused, business organisation. The Chamber represents more than 1,300 businesses with almost 130,000 employees in the private sector covering all industry sectors, ranging in size from sole traders to multi-national corporations.

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